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CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

PAGE

BURNS 1

LIFE OF HEYNE 54

GERMAN PLAYWRIGHTS 85

VOLTAIRE 120

NOVALIS 183

SIGNS OF THE TIMES 230

ON HISTORY 253

APPENDIX.

No. 1. JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER'S REVIEW OF MADAME DE STAEL'S 'ALLEMAGNE' . . 265

2. SCHILLER, GOETHE AND MADAME DE STAEL . 289

SUMMARY 299

MISCELLANIES.

BURNS.[1]

[1828.]

In the modern arrangements of society, it is no uncommon thing that a man of genius must, like Butler, 'ask for bread and receive a stone;' for, in spite of our grand maxim of supply and demand, it is by no means the highest excellence that men are most forward to recognise. The inventor of a spinning-jenny is pretty sure of his reward in his own day; but the writer of a true poem, like the apostle of a true religion, is nearly as sure of the contrary. We do not know whether it is not an aggravation of the injustice, that there is generally a posthumous retribution. Robert Burns, in the course of Nature, might yet have been living; but his short life was spent in toil and penury; and he died, in the prime of his manhood, miserable and neglected: and yet already a brave mausoleum shines over his dust, and more than one splendid monument has been reared in other places to his fame; the street where he languished in poverty is called by his name; the highest personages in our literature have been proud to appear as his commentators and admirers; and here is the *sixth* narrative of his *Life* that has been given to the world!

Mr. Lockhart thinks it necessary to apologise for this new attempt on such a subject: but his readers, we believe, will readily acquit him; or, at worst, will censure only the performance of his task, not the choice of it. The character of Burns,

[1] Edinburgh Review, No. 96.—*The Life of Robert Burns.* By J. G. Lockhart, LL.B. Edinburgh, 1828.

indeed, is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted; and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is removed by Time. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet; and this is probably true; but the fault is at least as likely to be the valet's as the hero's. For it is certain, that to the vulgar eye few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is difficult for men to believe that the man, the mere man whom they see, nay perhaps painfully feel, toiling at their side through the poor jostlings of existence, can be made of finer clay than themselves. Suppose that some dining acquaintance of Sir Thomas Lucy's, and neighbour of John a Combe's, had snatched an hour or two from the preservation of his game, and written us a Life of Shakspeare! What dissertations should we not have had,—not on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, but on the wool-trade, and deer-stealing, and the libel and vagrant laws; and how the Poacher became a Player; and how Sir Thomas and Mr. John had Christian bowels, and did not push him to extremities! In like manner, we believe, with respect to Burns, that till the companions of his pilgrimage, the Honourable Excise Commissioners, and the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, and the Dumfries Aristocracy, and all the Squires and Earls, equally with the Ayr Writers, and the New and Old Light Clergy, whom he had to do with, shall have become invisible in the darkness of the Past, or visible only by light borrowed from *his* juxtaposition, it will be difficult to measure him by any true standard, or to estimate what he really was and did, in the eighteenth century, for his country and the world. It will be difficult, we say; but still a fair problem for literary historians; and repeated attempts will give us repeated approximations.

His former Biographers have done something, no doubt, but by no means a great deal, to assist us. Dr. Currie and Mr. Walker, the principal of these writers, have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: Their own and the world's true relation to their author, and the style in which it became such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr. Currie loved the poet truly; more perhaps than he avowed to his readers, or even to himself; yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronising, apologetic air; as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar and gentleman, should do such

honour to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith; and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr. Walker offends more deeply in the same kind: and both err alike in presenting us with a detached catalogue of his several supposed attributes, virtues and vices, instead of a delineation of the resulting character as a living unity. This, however, is not painting a portrait; but gauging the length and breadth of the several features, and jotting down their dimensions in arithmetical ciphers. Nay it is not so much as that: for we are yet to learn by what arts or instruments the mind *could* be so measured and gauged.

Mr. Lockhart, we are happy to say, has avoided both these errors. He uniformly treats Burns as the high and remarkable man the public voice has now pronounced him to be: and in delineating him, he has avoided the method of separate generalities, and rather sought for characteristic incidents, habits, actions, sayings; in a word, for aspects which exhibit the whole man, as he looked and lived among his fellows. The book accordingly, with all its deficiencies, gives more insight, we think, into the true character of Burns, than any prior biography: though, being written on the very popular and condensed scheme of an article for *Constable's Miscellany*, it has less depth than we could have wished and expected from a writer of such power; and contains rather more, and more multifarious quotations than belong of right to an original production. Indeed, Mr. Lockhart's own writing is generally so good, so clear, direct and nervous, that we seldom wish to see it making place for another man's. However, the spirit of the work is throughout candid, tolerant and anxiously conciliating; compliments and praises are liberally distributed, on all hands, to great and small; and, as Mr. Morris Birkbeck observes of the society in the backwoods of America, 'the courtesies of polite life are never lost sight of for a moment.' But there are better things than these in the volume; and we can safely testify, not only that it is easily and pleasantly read a first time, but may even be without difficulty read again.

Nevertheless, we are far from thinking that the problem of Burns's Biography has yet been adequately solved. We do not allude so much to deficiency of facts or documents,—though

of these we are still every day receiving some fresh accession, —as to the limited and imperfect application of them to the great end of Biography. Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did coexisting circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavours and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society? He who should answer these questions, in regard to any individual, would, as we believe, furnish a model of perfection in Biography. Few individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies*. But Burns, if we mistake not, is one of these few individuals; and such a study, at least with such a result, he has not yet obtained. Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended for.

Burns first came upon the world as a prodigy; and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the 'nine days' have long since elapsed; and the very continuance of this clamour proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may now be well-nigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let

it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert moor, where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say, that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model; or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works, accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with a pickaxe; and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Ferguson or Ramsay for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labour, a gift, which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindliest era of his whole life; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year: and then ask, If it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropical

tornado; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapours, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendour, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colours, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business; we are not so sure of this; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy: time and means were not lent him for this; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perish on his rock, 'amid the melancholy main,' presented to the reflecting mind such a 'spectacle of pity and fear' as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathising loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the 'Eternal Melodies,' is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queenlike indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and

torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognised it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny,—for so in our ignorance we must speak,—his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit, which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The 'Daisy' falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that 'wee, cowering, timorous beastie,' cast forth, after all its provident pains, to 'thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld.' The 'hoar visage' of Winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for 'it 'raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the* 'wind.' A true Poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart: and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself

equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the 'insolence of condescension' cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was 'quick to learn;' a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; 'a soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings 'the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself 'into articulate melody.' And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on, before another such is given us to waste.

All that remains of Burns, the Writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humour of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments, would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they

are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognised: his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wiredrawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and laboured amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; 'in homely rustic jingle;' but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule, *Si vis me flere*, is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him; but in either case,

his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering. True, the discovery is easy enough: but the practical appliance is not easy; is indeed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in the hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head too dull to discriminate the true from the false; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting, and we have Affectation, the bane of literature, as Cant, its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry, as in life! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success; he who has much to unfold, will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron, for instance, was no common man: yet if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his Harolds and Giaours, we would ask, real men; we mean, poetically consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author, which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies, this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt and moody desperation, with so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humour, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last threescore and ten years. To our minds there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical,

false, affected, in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan*, especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work, he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was; and seemed so intent on his subject as, for moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay he had declared formal war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all: to *read its own consciousness without mistakes*, without errors involuntary or wilful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavour to fulfil it. Certain of his Letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style; but on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted; a certain high-flown inflated tone; the stilting emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether unaffected. Does not Shakspeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast! But even with regard to these Letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative deficiency in language. Burns, though for most part he writes with singular force and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scottish verse; not master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These Letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascer-

tained; whom therefore he is either forearming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks will please them. At all events, we should remember that these faults, even in his Letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop are uniformly excellent.

But we return to his Poetry. In addition to its Sincerity, it has another peculiar merit, which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects; or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is forever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand, he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical but prosaic; it is in some past, distant, conventional heroic world, that poetry resides; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-coloured Novels and iron-mailed Epics, with their locality not on the Earth, but somewhere nearer to the Moon. Hence our Virgins of the Sun, and our Knights of the Cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-coloured Chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates, who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, 'a sermon on the duty of staying at home.' Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them. That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one day, be an ancient one; and have as quaint a costume as the rest; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness? Does Homer interest us now, because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries? Let our poets look to this: is their feeling really

finer, truer, and their vision deeper than that of other men,—they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so,—they have nothing to hope, but an ephemeral favour, even from the highest.

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavours; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes that wander through Eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. Is there not the fifth act of a Tragedy in every death-bed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be Comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his Farce? Man's life and nature is, as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them; or they come and pass away before him in vain. He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him, which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one.

In this respect, Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet, better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had by his own strength kept the whole Minerva Press going, to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance 'the elder dramatists,' and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing

the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purblind man 'travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren.' But happily every poet is born *in* the world; and sees it, with or against his will, every day and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capital cities and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices; the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther, lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom, that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mossgiel and Tarbolton, if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's, or the Tuileries itself.

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago; inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakspeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if *we* saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material but the workman that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the dim *eye*. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battle-fields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Halloween* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laughter, since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus, till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl: neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent* or Roman *Jubilee;* but nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic

life. Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting.

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardour of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his 'lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit.' And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin of a Retzsch is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of *every* sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours):

When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r,
And Phœbus *gies a short-liv'd glowr*
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

'Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was lock'd,
While burns *wi' snawy wreeths upchok'd*
Wild-eddying swhirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd
Down headlong hurl.

Are there not 'descriptive touches' here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. 'Poor labour locked in sweet sleep;' the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye!—Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig:*

When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar's *mossy* fountains *boil,*
Or where the Greenock winds his *moorland* course,
Or haunted Garpal[2] draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds and *spotting* thowes,
In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck down to the Rottonkey,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd *tumbling* sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise!
And *dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.*

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture of that Deluge! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight; the 'gumlie jaups' and the 'pouring skies' are mingled together; it is a world of rain and ruin.—In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare,* in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops, or yoking of Priam's Chariot. Nor have we forgotten stout

[2] *Fabulosus* Hydaspes!

Burn-the-wind and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink:* but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs*. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation:

> *The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,*
> *And Time is setting wi' me, O;*
> Farewell, false friends! false lover, farewell!
> I'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent; for in fact, unless we *see* our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections? Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary power. Homer surpasses all men in this quality: but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity; their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigour and laconic pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of 'a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God.' Our Scottish forefathers in the battle-field struggled forward '*red-wat-shod*:' in this one word, a full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for Art!

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigour of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart says of him, with some surprise: 'All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could 'judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was

'rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned 'temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species 'of composition. From his conversation I should have pro- 'nounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambi- 'tion he had chosen to exert his abilities.' But this, if we mistake not, is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility, and a certain vague random tunefulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts that exist in the Poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination, which shudders at the Hell of Dante, is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the Poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakspeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an Understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indited a *Novum Organum*. What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength; and can understand how, in conversation, his quick sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient; nay perhaps the highest Truth is that which will the most certainly elude it. For this logic works by words, and 'the highest,' it has been said, 'cannot be expressed in words.' We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart,

it will be remembered, 'wonders,' in the passage above quoted, that Burns had formed some distinct conception of the 'doctrine of association.' We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here for instance:

'We know nothing,' thus writes he, 'or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or wo beyond death and the grave.'

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent: except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character; neither is delicacy in the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling; that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that 'Love furthers knowledge:' but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have

spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: 'the hoary hawthorn,' the 'troop of gray plover,' the 'solitary curlew,' all are dear to him; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the 'ourie cattle' and 'silly sheep,' and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' wintry war,
Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scaur.
Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing,
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
And close thy ee?

The tenant of the mean hut, with its 'ragged roof and chinky wall,' has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben;
O, wad ye tak a thought and men'!
Ye aiblins might,—I dinna ken,—
Still hae a stake;
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Even for your sake!

"*He* is the father of curses and lies," said Dr. Slop; "and is cursed and damned already."—"I am sorry for it," quoth my uncle Toby!—a Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.

But has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle, that 'Indignation makes verses'? It has been so said, and is true enough: but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The

Indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted Love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much Poetry: otherwise, we suppose, the Tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said, he loved a good hater; by which he must have meant, not so much one that hated violently, as one that hated wisely; hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite of Johnson's paradox, tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in print since then, we rather believe that good men deal sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise: nay that a 'good' hater is still a desideratum in this world. The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

Of the verses which Indignation makes, Burns has also given us specimens: and among the best that were ever given. Who will forget his '*Dweller in yon Dungeon dark*,' a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus? The secrets of the infernal Pit are laid bare; a boundless baleful 'darkness visible;' and streaks of hell-fire quivering madly in its black haggard bosom!

> Dweller in yon Dungeon dark,
> Hangman of Creation, mark!
> Who in widow's weeds appears,
> Laden with unhonoured years,
> Noosing with care a bursting purse,
> Baited with many a deadly curse!

Why should we speak of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*; since all know of it, from the king to the meanest of his subjects? This dithyrambic was composed on horseback; in riding in the middle of tempests, over the wildest Galloway moor, in company with a Mr. Syme, who, observing the poet's looks, forbore to speak,—judiciously enough, for a man composing *Bruce's Address* might be unsafe to trifle with. Doubtless this stern hymn was singing itself, as he formed it, through the soul of Burns: but to the external ear, it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind. So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under

this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.

Another wild stormful Song, that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *Macpherson's Farewell*. Perhaps there is something in the tradition itself that coöperates. For was not this grim Celt, this shaggy Northland Cacus, that 'lived a life of sturt and strife, and died by treacherie,'—was not he too one of the Nimrods and Napoleons of the earth, in the arena of his own remote misty glens, for want of a clearer and wider one? Nay, was there not a touch of grace given him? A fibre of love and softness, of poetry itself, must have lived in his savage heart: for he composed that air the night before his execution; on the wings of that poor melody his better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain and all the ignominy and despair, which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss! Here also, as at Thebes, and in Pelops' line, was material Fate matched against man's Free-will; matched in bitterest though obscure duel; and the ethereal soul sank not, even in its blindness, without a cry which has survived it. But who, except Burns, could have given words to such a soul; words that we never listen to without a strange half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling?

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

Under a lighter disguise, the same principle of Love, which we have recognised as the great characteristic of Burns, and of all true poets, occasionally manifests itself in the shape of Humour. Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns; he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature. We speak not of his bold and often irresistible faculty of caricature; for this is Drollery rather than Humour: but a much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him; and comes forth here and there, in evanescent and beautiful touches; as in his *Address to the Mouse*, or the *Farmer's Mare*, or in his *Elegy on poor Mailie*, which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a Humour as fine as that of Sterne; yet altogether different, original, peculiar,—the Humour of Burns.

Of the tenderness, the playful pathos, and many other kindred qualities of Burns's Poetry, much more might be said; but now, with these poor outlines of a sketch, we must prepare to quit this part of our subject. To speak of his individual Writings, adequately and with any detail, would lead us far beyond our limits. As already hinted, we can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of Poems: they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense; yet seldom essentially melodious, aerial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* itself, which enjoys so high a favour, does not appear to us at all decisively to come under this last category. It is not so much a poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when the tradition was believed, and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modelling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep mysterious chord of human nature, which once responded to such things; and which lives in us too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes, and to far different issues. Our German readers will understand us, when we say, that he is not the Tieck but the Musäus of this tale. Externally it is all green and living; yet look closer, it is no firm growth, but only ivy on a rock. The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public-house and the gate of Tophet, is nowhere bridged over, nay the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-coloured spectrum painted on ale-vapours, and the Farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually accomplished; but we find far more 'Shakspearean' qualities, as these of *Tam o' Shanter* have been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say, that the most strictly poetical of all his 'poems' is one which does not appear in Currie's Edition; but has been often printed before and since, under the

humble title of *The Jolly Beggars*. The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature; but it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined; and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement; yet sharp and precise in its details; every face is a portrait: that *raucle carlin*, that *wee Apollo*, that *Son of Mars*, are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Ragcastle of 'Poosie-Nansie.' Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the Night is drawn asunder for a moment; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tatterdemalions are seen in their boisterous revel; for the strong pulse of Life vindicates its right to gladness even here; and when the curtain closes, we prolong the action, without effort; the next day as the last, our *Caird* and our *Balladmonger* are singing and soldiering; their 'brats and callets' are hawking, begging, cheating; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humour, warm life and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers, for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to call this the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say only, that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind, as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars' Opera*, in the *Beggars' Bush*, as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigour, equals this *Cantata;* nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

But by far the most finished, complete and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs*. It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction; in its highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief simple species of composition; and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy;

rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns; which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced: for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough 'by persons of quality;' we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals; many a rhymed speech 'in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius the Portugal Bishop,' rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavouring to sing; though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region far enough short of the *Soul;* not in which, but in a certain inane Limbo of the Fancy, or even in some vaporous debateable-land on the outskirts of the Nervous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades *his* poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view: in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops of song, which Shakspeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or sliest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft, 'sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft

as their parting tear.' If we farther take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut*, to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for *Mary in Heaven;* from the glad kind greeting of *Auld Langsyne*, or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray*, to the fire-eyed fury of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart,—it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. 'Let me make the songs of a people,' said he, 'and you shall make its laws.' Surely, if ever any Poet might have equalled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-coloured joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable: we mean, as exerted specially on the Literature of his country, at least on the Literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish literature, has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers, most popular in Burns's time, were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling; literature was, as it were, without any local environment; was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays and Glovers seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo;* the thing written bears no mark of place; it is not written so much for Englishmen, as for men; or rather, which is the inevitable result of this, for certain

Generalisations which philosophy termed men. Goldsmith is an exception: not so Johnson; the scene of his *Rambler* is little more English than that of his *Rasselas*.

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree, the case with Scotland. In fact, our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, so far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British, we had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their *Spectators*, our good John Boston was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man*. Then came the schisms in our National Church, and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long, Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our 'fervid genius,' there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them: but neither had he aught to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche, was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally *lived*, as metaphysically *investigated*. Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic: but their general deficiency in moral principle, not to say their avowed sensuality and un-

belief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this accountable enough. We hope, there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland, and the venerable Structure of social and moral Life, which Mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this: surely the roots, that have fixed themselves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up not into briers, but into roses, in the field of his life! Our Scottish sages have no such propensities: the field of their life shows neither briers nor roses; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the 'Doctrine of Rent' to the 'Natural History of Religion,' are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality!

With Sir Walter Scott at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away: our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among us like a French Colony, or some knot of Propaganda Missionaries; but like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathising in all our attachments, humours and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water but in mould, and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns: 'a tide of Scottish prejudice,' as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, 'had been poured along his 'veins; and he felt that it would boil there till the flood-gates 'shut in eternal rest.' It seemed to him, as if *he* could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all. One small province stood open for him,—that of Scottish Song; and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he laboured there! In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him; it is the little happy-valley of his careworn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction, he eagerly searches after some lonely bro-

ther of the muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name from the oblivion that was covering it! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end:

> . . . A wish (I mind its power),
> A wish, that to my latest hour
> Will strongly heave my breast,—
> That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
> Some useful plan or book could make,
> Or sing a sang at least.
>
> The rough bur Thistle spreading wide
> Amang the bearded bear,
> I turn'd my weeding-clips aside,
> And spared the symbol dear.

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These Poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when intercalated in this at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this, too, alas, was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched; some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed; the rest more or less clearly indicated; with many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his Poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfil it must often be accepted for the fulfilment; much more is this the case in regard to his Life, the sum and result of all his endeavours, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay was mistaken, and altogether marred.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year, he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judg-

ment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim, even with such distinctness as is common among ordinary men; and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of will, which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him; he must dream and struggle about a certain 'Rock of Independence;' which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others; of his standing at a higher or at a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colours: he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from without, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honour, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia of Enjoyments, not earned by his own labour, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onwards with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; travels, nay advances far, but advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path; and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, that of clear decided Activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps, they but interest us the more in his favour. This blessing is not given soonest to the best; but rather, it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without; as complex a condition from within: no 'preëstablished har-

mony' existed between the clay soil of Mossgiel and the empyrean soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns; and through life, as it might have appeared, far more simply situated: yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood; but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's Life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine, so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toilworn; but otherwise not ungenial, and, with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are; valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, openminded for more: a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore at once, and fearless towards all that God has made: in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *Man*. Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society; and was worth descending far in society to seek. Unfortunately, he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw; the crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anywise prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British Literature,—for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school-system: Burns remained a hard-worked ploughboy, and British literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged scene there is much to nourish him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want.

Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling: the solemn words, *Let us worship God*, are heard there from a 'priest-like father;' if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard warfare they are there together, a 'little band of brethren.' Neither are such tears, and the deep beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humour of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of Existence is slowly rising, in many-coloured splendour and gloom: and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

> . . . . . in glory and in joy,
> Behind his plough, upon the mountain side.

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world; more so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life; a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of Manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers; we hope they are mistaken: for Sin and Remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada. We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's-

service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly Action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure; but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life; how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself; and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free. Surely, such lessons as this last, which, in one shape or other, is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of Fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he would have learned it fully, which he never did; and been saved many a lasting aberration, many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history, that at this time too he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted, as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these free-minded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurors than these men to exorcise. We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at some period of his history; or even that he could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed: but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by 'passions raging like demons' from within, he had little need of sceptical misgivings to whisper

treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder; for now not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost; men and Fortune are leagued for his hurt; 'hungry Ruin has him in the wind.' He sees no escape but the saddest of all: exile from his loved country, to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the 'gloomy night is gathering fast,' in mental storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland:

> Farewell, my friends; farewell, my foes!
> My peace with these, my love with those:
> The bursting tears my heart declare;
> Adieu, my native banks of Ayr!

Light breaks suddenly in on him in floods; but still a false transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh; hastens thither with anticipating heart; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there, gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honour, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern Literature; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern Politics. For it is nowise as 'a mockery king,' set there by favour, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated; still less is he a mad Rienzi, whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head: but he stands there on his own basis; cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself; putting forth no claim which there is not strength *in* him, as well as about him, to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point:

'It needs no effort of imagination,' says he, 'to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bonmots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble,—nay, to tremble visibly,—beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves.'

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us: details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's personal interviews with Burns as among the best passages of his Narrative: a time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious:

'As for Burns,' writes Sir Walter, 'I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantùm*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him: but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner; but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing

I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side,—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:

> "Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery baptised in tears."

'Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's called by the unpromising title of "The Justice of Peace." I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

'His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture: but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i. e.* none of your modern agriculturists who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

'I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he

talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

'This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.—I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since.'

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favour; the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigour and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here. In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena, in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever, that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one, and reject the other; but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects; making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men: we 'long for

the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price;' and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

The Edinburgh Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock, whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as at a highly curious *thing*. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed: certain modica of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence; which exchange once effected, the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewhat richer; in fame and the show of happiness, infinitely richer; but in the substance of it, as poor as ever. Nay poorer; for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition; and through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and nobler aims.

What Burns was next to do or to avoid; how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself: of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say, that his Excise and Farm scheme does not seem to us a very unreasonable one; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalised at his ever resolving to *gauge;* and would have had him lie at the pool, till the spirit of Patronage stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors! They know not the manner of this spirit; and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns, that he felt so early on what ground he was standing; and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splen-

did possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme: he might expect, if it chanced that he *had* any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he 'did not intend to borrow honour from any profession.' We reckon that his plan was honest and well-calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul; to his last day, he owed no man anything.

Meanwhile he begins well: with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a-year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy. Generous also, and worthy of him, was the treatment of the woman whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself: what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds; for the best teacher of duties, that still lie dim to us, is the Practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the 'patrons of genius,' who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have healed, vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them; and Poetry would have shone through them as of old: and in her clear ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny, and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists,[3] all manner of fashionable danglers after literature, and, far worse, all manner of convivial Mæcenases, hovered round him in his retreat; and his good as well as his weak qualities secured them influence over him. He was flattered by their

[3] There is one little sketch by certain 'English gentlemen' of this class, which, though adopted in Currie's Narrative, and since then repeated in most others, we have all along felt an invincible disposition to regard as imaginary: 'On a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man em-'ployed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of fox-'skin on his head, a loose greatcoat fixed round him by a belt, from which 'depended an enormous Highland broad-sword. It was Burns.' Now, we

notice; and his warm social nature made it impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on his way apart from them. These men, as we believe, were proximately the means of his ruin. Not that they meant him any ill; they only meant themselves a little good; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it! But they wasted his precious time and his precious talent; they disturbed his composure, broke down his returning habits of temperance and assiduous contented exertion. Their pampering was baneful to him; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighbourhood; and Burns had no retreat but to 'the Rock of Independence,' which is but an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance, but will screen no one from real wind and wet. Flushed with irregular excitement, exasperated alternately by contempt of others, and contempt of himself, Burns was no longer regaining his peace of mind, but fast losing it forever. There was a hollowness at the heart of his life, for his conscience did not now approve what he was doing.

Amid the vapours of unwise enjoyment, of bootless remorse, and angry discontent with Fate, his true loadstar, a life of Poetry, with Poverty, nay with Famine if it must be so, was too often altogether hidden from his eyes. And yet he sailed a sea, where without some such loadstar there was no right steering. Meteors of French Politics rise before him, but these were not *his* stars. An accident this, which hastened, but did not originate, his worst distresses. In the mad contentions of that time, he comes in collision with certain official Superiors; is wounded by them; cruelly lacerated, we should say, could a dead mechanical implement, in any case, be called cruel: and shrinks, in indignant pain, into deeper self-seclusion, into gloomier moodiness than ever. His life has now lost its unity: it is a life of fragments; led with little aim, beyond the melancholy one of securing its own continuance,—in fits of wild false joy when such offered, and of black despondency when they passed away. His cha-

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rather think, it was *not* Burns. For, to say nothing of the fox-skin cap, the loose and quite Hibernian watchcoat with the belt, what are we to make of this 'enormous Highland broad-sword' depending from him? More especially, as there is no word of parish constables on the outlook to see whether, as Dennis phrases it, he had an eye to his own midriff or that of the public! Burns, of all men, had the least need, and the least tendency, to seek for distinction, either in his own eyes, or those of others, by such poor mummeries.

racter before the world begins to suffer: calumny is busy with him; for a miserable man makes more enemies than friends. Some faults he has fallen into, and a thousand misfortunes; but deep criminality is what he stands accused of, and they that are *not* without sin cast the first stone at him! For is he not a well-wisher to the French Revolution, a Jacobin, and therefore in that one act guilty of all? These accusations, political and moral, it has since appeared, were false enough: but the world hesitated little to credit them. Nay his convivial Mæcenases themselves were not the last to do it. There is reason to believe that, in his later years, the Dumfries Aristocracy had partly withdrawn themselves from Burns, as from a tainted person, no longer worthy of their acquaintance. That painful class, stationed, in all provincial cities, behind the outmost breastwork of Gentility, there to stand siege and do battle against the intrusions of Grocerdom and Grazierdom, had actually seen dishonour in the society of Burns, and branded him with their veto; had, as we vulgarly say, *cut* him! We find one passage in this Work of Mr. Lockhart's, which will not out of our thoughts:

'A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me that he was seldom more grieved, than when riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening about this time to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognise him. The horseman dismounted, and joined Burns, who on his proposing to cross the street said: "Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad:

> "His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
> His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
> But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,
> And casts himsell dowie upon the corn-bing.
>
> O, were we young as we ance hae been,
> We sud hae been gallopping down on yon green,
> And linking it ower the lily-white lea!
> *And werena my heart light, I wad die.*"

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after reciting these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his

young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived.'

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps 'where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart,'[4] and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breastwork of gentility is quite thrown down,—who would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother!

It was not now to be hoped that the genius of Burns would ever reach maturity, or accomplish aught worthy of itself. His spirit was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the Gifted! 'If he entered an inn at midnight, 'after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival cir-'culated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes 'had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!' Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his Songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how too, he spurned all other reward for it but what the labour itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement: and here, in his destitution and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too, that with all the 'thoughtless follies' that had 'laid him low,' the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country: so he cast from him the poor sixpence a-day, and served zealously as a volunteer. Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone, and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts forever.

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for mat-

[4] *Ubi sæva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.* Swift's Epitaph.

ters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns: clear poetical activity; madness; or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it: and yet Burns had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that by counsel, true affection and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion, which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not believe that this was his essential want; or well see how any private man could, even presupposing

Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society, could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: Friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists; except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognised as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced 'Patronage,' that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be 'twice cursed;' cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern Honour; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of Pride, which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from Royalty would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme,

therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury, nay it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do; or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns, as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English did Shakspeare; as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler, as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather grapes of thorns; or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws? How, indeed, could the 'nobility and gentry of his native land' hold out any help to this 'Scottish Bard, proud of his name and country'? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve; their borough interests to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general; few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer; for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumb-screws, from the hard hand; and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy; which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylons they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval Chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavours are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise*. Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, 'Love one another, bear one another's burdens,' given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity; but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless* is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still, we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more rather than with less kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favour to its Teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days; but the world's Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons; Tasso pines in the cell of a madhouse; Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so 'persecuted they the Prophets,' not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where, then, does it lie? We are forced to answer: With himself; it is his inward, not his outward misfortunes that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise; seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is Death; nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over Death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done, may be done again: nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring,

but of silent fearlessness, of Self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns; and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly, and Burns could be nothing, no man formed as he was can be anything, by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular Verse-monger, or poetical *Restaurateur*, but of a true Poet and Singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him: and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness and triviality, when true Nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of Pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavouring to reconcile these two; and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

Burns was born poor; and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavour to be otherwise: this it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it: nay, his own Father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard; but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of Poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke was banished as a traitor; and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed *Paradise Lost?* Not only low, but fallen from a

height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work, a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Araucana*, which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written without even the aid of paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted? Two things; both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals; and a single, not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshippers; but seekers and worshippers of something far better than Self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high, heroic idea of Religion, of Patriotism, of heavenly Wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful; but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the 'golden-calf of Self-love,' however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient; and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age; in which heroism and devotedness were still practised, or at least not yet disbelieved in: but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this; but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no Religion; in the shallow age, where his days were cast, Religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light *forms* of Religion; and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling

adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish; like that of Rabelais, 'a great Perhaps.'

He loved Poetry warmly, and in his heart; could he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For Poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion; is itself Wisdom and Religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wildfire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich, to be, or to seem, 'independent;' but it *was* necessary for him to be at one with his own heart; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life; 'to seek within himself for 'that consistency and sequence, which external events would 'forever refuse him.' He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavours. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation: poverty, neglect and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his Art, were a small matter to him; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy, with pity. Nay, we question whether for his culture as a Poet poverty and much suffering for a season were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. 'I would not for much,' says Jean Paul, 'that I had been born richer.' And yet Paul's birth was poor enough; for, in another place, he adds: 'The prisoner's allowance is bread and water; and I had often only the latter.' But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; or, as he has himself expressed it, 'the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage.'

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry; industry which all true feeling sanctions, nay prescribes, and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones: but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets?

What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices; brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven? Was it his aim to *enjoy* life? Tomorrow he must go drudge as an Exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run *amuck* against them all. How could a man, so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did, under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness; but not in others; only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly 'respectability.' We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honours, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the Infinite and the Eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the house-top to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have 'purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of 'Satan;' for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and man of the world he must not be; vulgar Ambition will not live kindly with poetic Adoration; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world; but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now—we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow!

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher Doctrine, a purer Truth; they

had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the Unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship will they live there: they are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess, it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece of history,—*twice* told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for the highest of all enterprises, that of being the Poet of his Age, to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: 'He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem.' If he cannot first so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are fit for him. Let him dwindle into a modish balladmonger; let him worship and besing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him. If, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favour of the great or of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favour and furtherance for literature; like the costliest flower-jar enclosing the loveliest amaranth. Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a Courser of the Sun

work softly in the harness of a Dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?

But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of Burns; but this also we must forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita* of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome; nay the circle of a ginhorse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured: and it is assumed that the diameter of the ginhorse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one never listens to with approval. Granted, the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs.

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble; neither will his Works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakspeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves; this little Valclusa Fountain

will also arrest our eye: for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines!

THE LIFE OF HEYNE.[1]

[1828.]

THE labours and merits of Heyne being better known, and more justly appreciated in England, than those of almost any other German, whether scholar, poet or philosopher, we cannot but believe that some notice of his life may be acceptable to most readers. Accordingly, we here mean to give a short abstract of this Volume, a miniature copy of the 'biographical portrait;' but must first say a few words on the portrait itself, and the limner by whom it was drawn.

Professor Heeren is a man of learning, and known far out of his own Hanoverian circle,—indeed, more or less to all students of history,—by his researches on Ancient Commerce, a voluminous account of which from his hand enjoys considerable reputation. He is evidently a man of sense and natural talent, as well as learning; and his gifts seem to lie round him in quiet arrangement, and very much at his own command. Nevertheless, we cannot admire him as a writer; we do not even reckon that such endowments as he has are adequately represented in his books. His style both of diction and thought is thin, cold, formal, without force or character, and painfully reminds us of college lectures. He can work rapidly, but with no freedom, and, as it were, only in one attitude, and at one sort of labour. Not that we particularly blame Professor Heeren for this, but that we think he might have been something better: these 'fellows in buckram,' very numerous in certain walks of literature, are an unfortunate rather than a guilty class of men; they have fallen, perhaps unwillingly, into the plan of writing by pattern, and can now do no other; for, in their minds, the beautiful comes at last to be simply synonymous

[1] FOREIGN REVIEW, No. 4.—*Christian Gottlob Heyne biographisch dargestellt von Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren.* (Christian Gottlob Heyne biographically portrayed by Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren.) Göttingen.

with the neat. Every sentence bears a family-likeness to its precursor; most probably it has a set number of clauses (three is a favourite number, as in Gibbon, for 'the Muses delight in odds'); has also a given rhythm, a known and foreseen music, simple but limited enough, like that of ill-bred fingers drumming on a table. And then it is strange how soon the outward rhythm carries the inward along with it; and the thought moves with the same stinted, hamstrung rub-a-dub as the words. In a state of perfection, this species of writing comes to resemble power-loom weaving; it is not the mind that is at work, but some scholastic machinery which the mind has of old constructed, and is from afar observing. Shot follows shot from the unwearied shuttle; and so the web is woven, ultimately and properly, indeed, by the wit of man, yet immediately and in the mean while by the mere aid of time and steam.

But our Professor's mode of speculation is little less intensely academic than his mode of writing. We fear he is something of what the Germans call a *Kleinstädter;* mentally as well as bodily, a 'dweller in a little town.' He speaks at great length, and with undue fondness, of the 'Georgia Augusta;' which, after all, is but the University of Göttingen, an earthly and no celestial institution: it is nearly in vain that he tries to contemplate Heyne as a European personage, or even as a German one; beyond the precincts of the Georgia Augusta his view seems to grow feeble, and soon dies away into vague inanity; so we have not Heyne, the man and scholar, but Heyne the Göttingen Professor. But neither is this habit of mind any strange or crying sin, or at all peculiar to Göttingen; as, indeed, most parishes in England can produce more than one example to show. And yet it is pitiful, when an establishment for universal science, which ought to be a watchtower where a man might see all the kingdoms of the world, converts itself into a workshop, whence he sees nothing but his toolbox and bench, and the world, in broken glimpses, through one patched and highly discoloured pane!

Sometimes, indeed, our worthy friend rises into a region of the moral sublime, in which it is difficult for a foreigner to follow him. Thus he says, on one occasion, speaking of Heyne: 'Immortal are his merits in regard to the catalogues'—of the Göttingen library. And, to cite no other instance except the last and best one, we are informed, that when Heyne died, 'the

'guardian angels of the Georgia Augusta waited, in that higher 'world, to meet him with blessings.' By Day and Night! there is no such guardian angel, that we know of, for the University of Göttingen; neither does it need one, being a good solid seminary of itself, with handsome stipends from Government. We had imagined too, that if anybody welcomed people into heaven, it would be St. Peter, or at least some angel of old standing, and not a mere mushroom, as this of Göttingen must be, created since the year 1739.

But we are growing very ungrateful to the good Heeren, who meant no harm by these flourishes of rhetoric, and indeed does not often indulge in them. The grand questions with us here are, Did he know the truth in this matter; and was he disposed to tell it honestly? To both of which questions we can answer without reserve, that all appearances are in his favour. He was Heyne's pupil, colleague, son-in-law, and so knew him intimately for thirty years: he has every feature also of a just, quiet, truth-loving man; so that we see little reason to doubt the authenticity, the innocence, of any statement in his Volume. What more have we to do with him, then, but to take thankfully what he has been pleased and able to give us, and, with all despatch, communicate it to our readers?

Heyne's Life is not without an intrinsic, as well as an external interest; for he had much to struggle with, and he struggled with it manfully; thus his history has a value independent of his fame. Some account of his early years we are happily enabled to give in his own words: we translate a considerable part of this passage; autobiography being a favourite sort of reading with us.

He was born at Chemnitz, in Upper Saxony, in September 1729; the eldest of a poor weaver's family, poor almost to the verge of destitution.

'My good father, George Heyne,' says he, 'was a native of the principality of Glogau, in Silesia, from the little village of Gravenschütz. His youth had fallen in those times when the Evangelist party of that province were still exposed to the oppressions and persecutions of the Romish Church. His kindred, enjoying the blessing of contentment in a humble but independent station, felt, like others, the influence of this proselytising bigotry, and lost their domestic peace by means of it. Some went over to the Romish faith. My father left his native village, and endeavoured, by the labour of his hands, to procure a livelihood in

Saxony. "What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul!" was the thought which the scenes of his youth had stamped the most deeply on his mind. But no lucky chance favoured his enterprises or endeavours to better his condition never so little. On the contrary, a series of perverse incidents kept him continually below the limits even of a moderate sufficiency. His old age was thus left a prey to poverty, and to her companions, timidity and depression of mind. Manufactures at that time were visibly declining in Saxony; and the misery among the working-classes, in districts concerned in the linen trade, was unusually severe. Scarcely could the labour of the hands suffice to support the labourer himself, still less his family. The saddest aspect which the decay of civic society can exhibit has always appeared to me to be this, when honourable, honour-loving, conscientious diligence cannot, by the utmost efforts of toil, obtain the necessaries of life; or when the working man cannot even find work, but must stand with folded arms, lamenting his forced idleness, through which himself and his family are verging to starvation, or it may be, actually suffering the pains of hunger.

'It was in the extremest penury that I was born and brought up. The earliest companion of my childhood was Want; and my first impressions came from the tears of my mother, who had not bread for her children. How often have I seen her on Saturday nights wringing her hands and weeping, when she had come back with what the hard toil, nay often the sleepless nights, of her husband had produced, and could find none to buy it! Sometimes a fresh attempt was made through me or my sister: I had to return to the purchasers with the same piece of ware, to see whether we could not possibly get rid of it. In that quarter there is a class of so-called merchants, who, however, are in fact nothing more than forestallers, that buy-up the linen made by the poorer people at the lowest price, and endeavour to sell it in other districts at the highest. Often have I seen one or other of these petty tyrants, with all the pride of a satrap, throw back the piece of goods offered him, or imperiously cut off some trifle from the price and wages required for it. Necessity constrained the poorer to sell the sweat of his brow at a *groschen* or two less, and again to make good the deficit by starving. It was the view of such things that awakened the first sparks of indignation in my young heart. The show of pomp and plenty among these purse-proud people, who fed themselves on the extorted crumbs of so many hundreds, far from dazzling me into respect or fear, filled me with rage against them. The first time I heard of tyrannicide at school, there rose vividly before me the project to become a Brutus on all those oppressors of the poor, who had so often cast my father and mother into straits: and here, for the first time, was an instance of a truth which I have since had frequent occasion to observe, that if the unhappy man, armed with feeling of his wrongs and a certain strength of soul, does not risk the utmost and become an open criminal, it is merely the beneficent result of those circumstances in which Providence has placed him,

thereby fettering his activity, and guarding him from such destructive attempts. That the oppressing part of mankind should be secured against the oppressed was, in the plan of inscrutable Wisdom, a most important element of the present system of things.

'My good parents did what they could, and sent me to a child's-school in the suburbs. I obtained the praise of learning very fast, and being very fond of it. My schoolmaster had two sons, lately returned from Leipzig; a couple of depraved fellows, who took all pains to lead me astray; and, as I resisted, kept me for a long time, by threats and mistreatment of all sorts, extremely miserable. So early as my tenth year, to raise the money for my school-wages, I had given lessons to a neighbour's child, a little girl, in reading and writing. As the common school-course could take me no farther, the point now was to get a private hour and proceed into Latin. But for that purpose a *guter groschen* weekly was required; this my parents had not to give. Many a day I carried this grief about with me: however, I had a godfather, who was in easy circumstances, a baker, and my mother's half-brother. One Saturday I was sent to this man to fetch a loaf. With wet eyes I entered his house, and chanced to find my godfather himself there. Being questioned why I was crying, I tried to answer, but a whole stream of tears broke loose, and scarcely could I make the cause of my sorrow intelligible. My magnanimous godfather offered to pay the weekly *groschen* out of his own pocket; and only this condition was imposed on me, that I should come to him every Sunday, and repeat what part of the Gospel I had learned by heart. This latter arrangement had one good effect for me,—it exercised my memory, and I learned to recite without bashfulness.

'Drunk with joy, I started off with my loaf; tossing it up time after time into the air, and barefoot as I was, I capered aloft after it. But hereupon my loaf fell into a puddle. This misfortune again brought me a little to reason. My mother heartily rejoiced at the good news; my father was less content. Thus passed a couple of years; and my schoolmaster intimated, what I myself had long known, that I could now learn no more from him.

'This then was the time when I must leave school, and betake me to the handicraft of my father. Were not the artisan under oppressions of so many kinds, robbed of the fruits of his hard toil, and of so many advantages to which the useful citizen has a natural claim; I should still say, *Had* I but continued in the station of my parents, what thousandfold vexation would at this hour have been unknown to me! My father could not but be anxious to have a grown-up son for an assistant in his labour, and looked upon my repugnance to it with great dislike. I again longed to get into the grammar-school of the town; but for this all means were wanting. Where was a *gulden* of quarterly fees, where were books and a blue cloak to be come at? How wistfully my look often hung on the walls of the school when I passed it!

'A clergyman of the suburbs was my second godfather; his name

was Sebastian Seydel ; my schoolmaster, who likewise belonged to his congregation, had told him of me. I was sent for, and after a short examination, he promised me that I should go to the town-school ; he himself would bear the charges. Who can express my happiness, as I then felt it ! I was despatched to the first teacher ; examined, and placed with approbation in the second class. Weakly from the first, pressed down with sorrow and want, without any cheerful enjoyment of childhood or youth, I was still of very small stature ; my class-fellows judged by externals, and had a very slight opinion of me. Scarcely, by various proofs of diligence and by the praises I received, could I get so far that they tolerated my being put beside them.

'And certainly my diligence was not a little hampered ! Of his promise, the clergyman, indeed, kept so much, that he paid my quarterly fees, provided me with a coarse cloak, and gave me some useless volumes that were lying on his shelves; but to furnish me with school-books he could not resolve. I thus found myself under the necessity of borrowing a class-fellow's books, and daily copying a part of them before the lesson. On the other hand, the honest man would have some hand himself in my instruction, and gave me from time to time some hours in Latin. In his youth he had learned to make Latin verses : scarcely was *Erasmus de Civilitate Morum* got over, when I too must take to verse-making ; all this before I had read any authors, or could possibly possess any store of words. The man was withal passionate and rigorous ; in every point repulsive ; with a moderate income he was accused of avarice ; he had the stiffness and self-will of an old bachelor, and at the same time the vanity of aiming to be a good Latinist, and, what was more, a Latin verse-maker, and consequently a literary clergyman. These qualities of his all contributed to overload my youth, and nip away in the bud every enjoyment of its pleasures.'

In this plain but somewhat leaden style does Heyne proceed, detailing the crosses and losses of his school-years. We cannot pretend that the narrative delights us much ; nay, that it is not rather bald and barren for such a narrative ; but its fidelity may be relied on; and it paints the clear, broad, strong and somewhat heavy nature of the writer, perhaps better than description could do. It is curious, for instance, to see with how little of a purely humane interest he looks back to his childhood ; how Heyne the man has almost grown into a sort of teaching-machine, and sees in Heyne the boy little else than the incipient Gerundgrinder, and tells us little else but how this wheel after the other was developed in him, and he came at last to grind in complete perfection. We could have wished to get some view into the interior of that poor Chemnitz hovel,

with its unresting loom and cheerless hearth, its squalor and devotion, its affection and repining; and the fire of natural genius struggling into flame amid such incumbrances, in an atmosphere so damp and close! But of all this we catch few farther glimpses; and hear only of Fabricius and Owen and Pasor, and school-examinations, and rectors that had been taught by Ernesti. Neither, in another respect, not of omission but of commission, can this piece of writing altogether content us. We must object a little to the spirit of it, as too narrow, too intolerant. Sebastian Seydel must have been a very meagre man; but is it right that Heyne, of all others, should speak of him with asperity? Without question the unfortunate Seydel meant nobly, had not thrift stood in his way. Did not he pay down his *gulden* every quarter regularly, and give the boy a blue cloak, though a coarse one? Nay, he bestowed old books on him, and instruction, according to his gift, in the mystery of verse-making. And was not all this something? And if thrift and charity had a continual battle to fight, was not that better than a flat surrender on the part of the latter? The other pastors of Chemnitz are all quietly forgotten: why should Sebastian be remembered to his disadvantage for being only a little better than they?

Heyne continued to be much infested with tasks from Sebastian, and sorely held down by want, and discouragement of every sort. The school-course moreover, he says, was bad; nothing but the old routine; vocables, translations, exercises; all without spirit or purpose. Nevertheless, he continued to make what we must call wonderful proficiency in these branches; especially as he had still to write every task before he could learn it. For he prepared 'Greek versions,' he says, 'also 'Greek verses; and by and by could write down in Greek 'prose, and at last in Greek as well as Latin verses, the dis-'courses he heard in church!' Some ray of hope was beginning to spring up within his mind. A certain small degree of self-confidence had first been awakened in him, as he informs us, by a 'pedantic adventure:'

'There chanced to be a school-examination held, at which the Superintendent, as chief school-inspector, was present. This man, Dr. Theodor Krüger, a theologian of some learning for his time, all at once interrupted the rector, who was teaching *ex cathedra*, and put the question: Who among the scholars could tell him what might be made *per*

anagramma from the word *Austria!* This whim had arisen from the circumstance that the first Silesian war was just begun; and some such anagram, reckoned very happy, had appeared in a newspaper.[2] No one of us knew so much as what an anagram was; even the rector looked quite perplexed. As none answered, the latter began to give us a description of anagrams in general. I set myself to work, and sprang forth with my discovery: *Vastari!* This was something different from the newspaper one: so much the greater was our Superintendent's admiration; and the more, as the successful aspirant was a little boy, on the lowest bench of the *secunda*. He growled out his applause to me; but at the same time set the whole school about my ears, as he stoutly upbraided them with being beaten by an *infimus*.

'Enough: this pedantic adventure gave the first impulse to the development of my powers. I began to take some credit to myself, and in spite of all the oppression and contempt in which I languished, to resolve on struggling forward. This first struggle was in truth ineffectual enough; was soon regarded as a piece of pride and conceitedness; it brought on me a thousand humiliations and disquietudes; at times it might degenerate on my part into defiance. Nevertheless, it kept me at the stretch of my diligence, ill-guided as it was, and withdrew me from the company of my class-fellows, among whom, as among children of low birth and bad nurture could not fail to be the case, the utmost coarseness and boorishness of every sort prevailed. The plan of these schools does not include any general inspection, but limits itself to mere intellectual instruction.

'Yet on all hands,' continues he, 'I found myself too sadly hampered. The perverse way in which the old parson treated me; at home the discontent and grudging of my parents, especially of my father, who could not get on with his work, and still thought that, had I kept by his way of life, he might now have had some help; the pressure of want, the feeling of being behind every other; all this would allow no cheerful thought, no sentiment of worth to spring up within me. A timorous, bashful, awkward carriage shut me out still farther from all exterior attractions. Where could I learn good manners, elegance, a right way of thought? Where could I attain any culture for heart and spirit?

'Upwards, however, I still strove. A feeling of honour, a wish for something better, an effort to work myself out of this abasement, incessantly attended me; but without direction as it was, it led me rather to sullenness, misanthropy and clownishness.

'At length a place opened for me, where some training in these points lay within my reach. One of our senators took his mother-in-law home to live with him; she had still two children with her, a son and a daughter, both about my own age. For the son private lessons were wanted; and happily I was chosen for the purpose.

'As these private lessons brought me in a *gulden* monthly, I now began to defend myself a little against the grumbling of my parents.

2 'As yet Saxony was against Austria, not, as in the end, allied with her.'

Hitherto I had been in the habit of doing work occasionally, that I might not be told how I was eating their bread for nothing; clothes, and oil for my lamp, I had earned by teaching in the house: these things I could now relinquish; and thus my condition was in some degree improved. On the other hand, I had now opportunity of seeing persons of better education. I gained the goodwill of the family; so that besides the lesson-hours, I generally lived there. Such society afforded me some culture, extended my conceptions and opinions, and also polished a little the rudeness of my exterior.'

In this senatorial house he must have been somewhat more at ease; for he now very privately fell in love with his pupil's sister, and made and burnt many Greek and Latin verses in her praise; and had sweet dreams of sometime rising 'so high as to be worthy of her.' Even as matters stood, he acquired her friendship and that of her mother. But the grand concern, for the present, was how to get to college at Leipzig. Old Sebastian had promised to stand good on this occasion; and unquestionably would have done so with the greatest pleasure, had it cost him nothing: but he promised and promised, without doing aught; above all, without putting his hand into his pocket; and elsewhere there was no help or resource. At length, wearied perhaps with the boy's importunity, he determined to bestir himself; and so directed his assistant, who was just making a journey to Leipzig, to show Heyne the road: the two arrived in perfect safety; Heyne still longing after cash, for of his own he had only two *gulden*, about five shillings; but the assistant left him in a lodging-house, and went his way, saying he had no farther orders!

The miseries of a poor scholar's life were now to be Heyne's portion in full measure. Ill-clothed, totally destitute of books, with five shillings in his purse, he found himself set down in the Leipzig University, to study all learning. Despondency at first overmastered the poor boy's heart, and he sank into sickness, from which indeed he recovered; but only, he says, 'to 'fall into conditions of life where he became the prey of des- 'peration.' How he contrived to exist, much more to study, is scarcely apparent from this narrative. The unhappy old Sebastian did at length send him some pittance, and at rare intervals repeated the dole; yet ever with his own peculiar grace; not till after unspeakable solicitations; in quantities that were consumed by inextinguishable debt, and coupled with sour admonitions; nay, on one occasion, addressed externally, ''*A Mr.*

Heyne, ETUDIANT NÉGLIGENT.' For half a year he would leave him without all help; then promise to come and see what he was doing; come accordingly, and return without leaving him a penny: neither could the destitute youth ever obtain any public furtherance; no *freitisch* (free-table) or *stipendium* was to be procured. Many times he had no regular meal; 'often not three halfpence for a loaf at midday.' He longed to be dead, for his spirit was often sunk in the gloom of darkness. 'One good heart alone,' says he, 'I found, and that in the ser-'vant-girl of the house where I lodged. She laid out money 'for my most pressing necessities, and risked almost all she 'had, seeing me in such frightful want. Could I but find thee 'in the world even now, thou good pious soul, that I might 'repay thee what thou then didst for me!'

Heyne declares it to be still a mystery to him how he stood all this. 'What carried me forward,' continues he, 'was not 'ambition; any youthful dream of one day taking a place, or 'aiming to take one, among the learned. It is true, the bitter 'feeling of debasement, of deficiency in education and external 'polish, the consciousness of awkwardness in social life, inces-'santly accompanied me. But my chief strength lay in a cer-'tain defiance of Fate. This gave me courage not to yield; 'everywhere to try to the uttermost whether I was doomed with-'out remedy never to rise from this degradation.'

Of order in his studies there could be little expectation. He did not even know what profession he was aiming after: old Sebastian was for theology; and Heyne, though himself averse to it, affected and only affected to comply: besides he had no money to pay class fees; it was only to open lectures, or at most to ill-guarded class-rooms, that he could gain admission. Of this ill-guarded sort was Winkler's; into which poor Heyne insinuated himself to hear philosophy. Alas, the first problem of all philosophy, the keeping of soul and body together, was wellnigh too hard for him! Winkler's students were of a riot ous description; accustomed, among other improprieties, to *scharren*, scraping with the feet. One day they chose to receive Heyne in this fashion; and he could not venture back. 'Nevertheless,' adds he, simply enough, 'the beadle came to 'me some time afterwards, demanding the fee: I had my own 'shifts to take before I could raise it.'

Ernesti was the only teacher from whom he derived any

benefit; the man, indeed, whose influence seems to have shaped the whole subsequent course of his studies. By dint of excessive endeavours he gained admittance to Ernesti's lectures; and here first learned, says Heeren, 'what interpretation of the classics meant.' One Crist also, a strange, fantastic Sir Plume of a Professor, who built much on taste, elegance of manners and the like, took some notice of him, and procured him a little employment as a private teacher. This might be more useful than his advice to imitate Scaliger, and read the ancients so as to begin with the most ancient, and proceed regularly to the latest. Small service it can do a bedrid man to convince him that waltzing is preferable to quadrilles! 'Crist's Lectures,' says he, 'were a tissue of endless digressions, which, however, 'now and then contained excellent remarks.'

But Heyne's best teacher was himself. No pressure of distresses, no want of books, advisers or encouragement, not hunger itself could abate his resolute perseverance. What books he could come at he borrowed; and such was his excess of zeal in reading, that for a whole half-year he allowed himself only two nights of sleep in the week, till at last a fever obliged him to be more moderate. His diligence was undirected, or ill-directed, but it never rested, never paused, and must at length prevail. Fortune had cast him into a cavern, and he was groping darkly round; but the prisoner was a giant, and would at length burst forth as a giant into the light of day. Heyne, without any clear aim, almost without any hope, had set his heart on attaining knowledge; a force, as of instinct, drove him on, and no promise and no threat could turn him back. It was at the very depth of his destitution, when he had not 'three *groschen* for a loaf to dine on,' that he refused a tutorship, with handsome enough appointments, but which was to have removed him from the University. Crist had sent for him one Sunday, and made him the proposal: 'There arose a violent 'struggle within me,' says he, 'which drove me to and fro for 'several days; to this hour it is incomprehensible to me where 'I found resolution to determine on renouncing the offer, and 'pursuing my object in Leipzig.' A man with a half volition goes backwards and forwards, and makes no way on the smoothest road; a man with a whole volition advances on the roughest, and will reach his purpose if there be even a little wisdom in it.

With his first two years' residence in Leipzig, Heyne's personal narrative terminates; not because the nodus of the history had been solved then, and his perplexities cleared up, but simply because he had not found time to relate farther. A long series of straitened hopeless days were yet appointed him. By Ernesti's or Crist's recommendation, he occasionally got employment in giving private lessons; at one time, he worked as secretary and classical hodman to 'Crusius, the philosopher,' who felt a little rusted in his Greek and Latin; everywhere he found the scantiest accommodation, and shifting from side to side in dreary vicissitude of want, had to spin-out an existence, warmed by no ray of comfort, except the fire that burnt or smouldered unquenchably within his own bosom. However, he had now chosen a profession, that of law, at which, as at many other branches of learning, he was labouring with his old diligence. Of preferment in this province there was, for the present, little or no hope; but this was no new thing with Heyne. By degrees, too, his fine talents and endeavours, and his perverse situation, began to attract notice and sympathy; and here and there some well-wisher had his eye on him, and stood ready to do him a service. Two-and-twenty years of penury and joyless struggling had now passed over the man; how many more such might be added was still uncertain; yet surely the longest winter is followed by a spring.

Another trifling incident, little better than that old 'pedantic adventure,' again brought about important changes in Heyne's situation. Among his favourers in Leipzig had been the preacher of a French chapel, one Lacoste, who, at this time, was cut off by death. Heyne, it is said in the real sorrow of his heart, composed a long Latin Epicedium on that occasion: the poem had nowise been intended for the press; but certain hearers of the deceased were so pleased with it, that they had it printed, and this in the finest style of typography and decoration. It was this latter circumstance, not the merit of the verses, which is said to have been considerable, that attracted the attention of Count Brühl, the well-known prime minister and favourite of the Elector. Brühl's sons were studying in Leipzig; he was pleased to express himself contented with the poem, and to say that he should like to have the author in his service. A prime minister's words are not as water spilt upon the ground,

which cannot be gathered; but rather as heavenly manna, which is treasured up and eaten, not without a religious sentiment. Heyne was forthwith written to from all quarters, that his fortune was made: he had but to show himself in Dresden, said his friends with one voice, and golden showers from the ministerial cornucopia would refresh him almost to saturation. For, was not the Count taken with him; and who in all Saxony, not excepting Serene Highness itself, could gainsay the Count? Over-persuaded, and against his will, Heyne at length determined on the journey; for which, as an indispensable preliminary, 'fifty-one *thalers*' had to be borrowed; and so, following this hopeful quest, he actually arrived at Dresden in April 1752. Count Brühl received him with the most captivating smiles; and even assured him in words, that he, Count Brühl, would take care of him. But a prime minister has so much to take care of! Heyne danced attendance all spring and summer; happier than our Johnson, inasmuch as he had not to 'blow his fingers in a cold lobby,' the weather being warm; and obtained not only promises, but useful experience of their value at courts.

He was to be made a secretary, with five hundred, with four hundred, or even with three hundred *thalers*, of income: only, in the mean while, his old stock of fifty-one had quite run out, and he had nothing to live upon. By great good luck, he procured some employment in his old craft, private teaching, which helped him through the winter; but as this ceased, he remained without resources. He tried working for the booksellers, and translated a French romance, and a Greek one, 'Chariton's *Loves of Chareas and Callirhoe*:' however, his emoluments would scarcely furnish him with salt, not to speak of victuals. He sold his few books. A licentiate in divinity, one Sonntag, took pity on his houselessness, and shared a garret with him; where, as there was no unoccupied bed, Heyne slept on the floor, with a few folios for his pillow. So fared he as to lodging: in regard to board, he gathered empty pease-cods, and had them boiled; this was not unfrequently his only meal.—O ye poor naked wretches! what would Bishop Watson say to this?—At length, by dint of incredible solicitations, Heyne, in the autumn of 1753, obtained, not his secretaryship, but the post of under-clerk (*copist*) in the Brühl Library, with one hundred *thalers* of salary; a sum barely sufficient to keep-in life, which, indeed,

was now a great point with him. In such sort was this young scholar 'taken care of.'

Nevertheless, it was under these external circumstances that he first entered on his proper career, and forcibly made a place for himself among the learned men of his day. In 1754 he prepared his edition of Tibullus, which was printed next year at Leipzig;[3] a work said to exhibit remarkable talent, inasmuch as 'the rudiments of all those excellences, by which Heyne afterwards became distinguished as a commentator on the Classics, are more or less apparent in it.' The most illustrious Henry Count von Brühl, in spite of the dedication, paid no regard to this Tibullus; as indeed Germany at large paid little: but, in another country, it fell into the hands of Rhunken, where it was rightly estimated, and lay waiting, as in due season appeared, to be the pledge of better fortune for its author.

Meanwhile the day of difficulty for Heyne was yet far from past. The profits of his Tibullus served to cancel some debts; on the strength of the hundred *thalers*, the spindle of Clotho might still keep turning, though languidly; but, ere long, new troubles arose. His superior in the Library was one Rost, a poetaster, atheist, and goldmaker, who corrupted his religious principles, and plagued him with caprices: over the former evil Heyne at length triumphed, and became a rational Christian; but the latter was an abiding grievance: not, indeed, forever, for it was removed by a greater. In 1756 the Seven-Years War broke out; Frederick advanced towards Dresden, animated with especial fury against Brühl; whose palaces accordingly in a few months were reduced to ashes, as his 70,000 splendid volumes were annihilated by fire and by water,[4] and all his domestics and dependents turned to the street without appeal.

Heyne had lately been engaged in studying Epictetus, and publishing, *ad fidem Codd. Mnspt.*, an edition of his Enchiridion;[5] from which, quoth Heeren, his great soul had acquired

[3] *Albii Tibulli quæ extant Carmina, novis curis castigata. Illustrissimo Domino Henrico Comiti de Brühl inscripta.* Lipsiæ, 1755.

[4] One rich cargo, on its way to Hamburg, sank in the Elbe; another still more valuable portion had been, for safety, deposited in a vault; through which passed certain pipes of artificial water-works; these the cannon broke, and when the vault came to be opened, all was reduced to pulp and mould. The bomb-shells burnt the remainder.

[5] Lipsiæ, 1756. The *Codices*, or rather the *Codex*, was in Brühl's Library.

much stoical nourishment. Such nourishment never comes wrong in life; and, surely, at this time Heyne had need of it all. However, he struggled as he had been wont: translated pamphlets, sometimes wrote newspaper articles; eat when he had wherewithal, and resolutely endured when he had not. By and by, Rabener, to whom he was a little known, offered him a tutorship in the family of a Herr von Schönberg; which Heyne, not without reluctance, accepted. Tutorships were at all times his aversion: his rugged plebeian proud spirit made business of that sort grievous: but Want stood over him, like an armed man, and was not to be reasoned with.

In this Schönberg family, a novel and unexpected series of fortunes awaited him; but whether for weal or for woe might still be hard to determine. The name of Theresa Weiss has become a sort of classical word in biography; her union with Heyne forms, as it were, a green cypress-and-myrtle oasis in his otherwise hard and stony history. It was here that he first met with her; that they learned to love each other. She was the orphan of a 'professor on the lute;' had long, amid poverty and afflictions, been trained, like the stoics, to bear and forbear; was now in her twenty-seventh year, and the humble companion, as she had once been the school-mate, of the Frau von Schönberg, whose young brother Heyne had come to teach. Their first interview may be described in his own words, which Heeren is here again happily enabled to introduce:

'It was on the 10th of October (her future death-day!) that I first entered the Schönberg house. Towards what mountains of mischances was I now proceeding! To what endless tissues of good and evil hap was the thread here taken up! Could I fancy that, at this moment, Providence was deciding the fortune of my life! I was ushered into a room, where sat several ladies engaged, with gay youthful sportiveness, in friendly confidential talk. Frau von Schönberg, but lately married, yet at this time distant from her husband, was preparing for a journey to him at Prague, where his business detained him. On her brow still beamed the pure innocence of youth; in her eyes you saw a glad soft vernal sky; a smiling loving complaisance accompanied her discourse. This too seemed one of those souls, clear and uncontaminated as they come from the hands of their Maker. By reason of her brother, in her tender love of him, I must have been to her no unimportant guest.

'Beside her stood a young lady, dignified in aspect, of fair, slender shape, not regular in feature, yet soul in every glance. Her words, her looks, her every movement, impressed you with respect; another sort of respect than what is paid to rank and birth. Good sense, good feel-

ing disclosed itself in all she did. You forgot that more beauty, more softness, might have been demanded; you felt yourself under the influence of something noble, something stately and earnest, something decisive that lay in her look, in her gestures; not less attracted to her than compelled to reverence her.

'More than esteem the first sight of Theresa did not inspire me with. What I noticed most were the efforts she made to relieve my embarrassment, the fruit of my downbent pride, and to keep me, a stranger, entering among familiar acquaintances, in easy conversation. Her good heart reminded her how much the unfortunate requires encouragement; especially when placed, as I was, among those to whose protection he must look up. Thus was my first kindness for her awakened by that good-heartedness, which made her among thousands a beneficent angel. She was one at this moment to myself; for I twice received letters from an unknown hand, containing money, which greatly alleviated my difficulties.

'In a few days, on the 14th of October, I commenced my task of instruction. Her I did not see again till the following spring, when she returned with her friend from Prague; and then only once or twice, as she soon accompanied Frau von Schönberg to the country, to Ænsdorf in Oberlausitz (Upper Lusatia). They left us, after it had been settled that I was to follow them in a few days with my pupil. My young heart joyed in the prospect of rural pleasures, of which I had, from of old, cherished a thousand delightful dreams. I still remember the 6th of May, when we set out for Ænsdorf.

'The society of two cultivated females, who belonged to the noblest of their sex, and the endeavour to acquire their esteem, contributed to form my own character. Nature and religion were the objects of my daily contemplation; I began to act and live on principles, of which, till now, I had never thought: these too formed the subject of our constant discourse. Lovely Nature and solitude exalted our feelings to a pitch of pious enthusiasm.

'Sooner than I, Theresa discovered that her friendship for me was growing into a passion. Her natural melancholy now seized her heart more keenly than ever: often our glad hours were changed into very gloomy and sad ones. Whenever our conversation chanced to turn on religion (she was of the Roman Catholic faith), I observed that her grief became more apparent. I noticed her redouble her devotions; and sometimes found her in solitude weeping and praying with such a fulness of heart as I had never seen.'

Theresa and her lover, or at least beloved, were soon separated, and for a long while kept much asunder; partly by domestic arrangements, still more by the tumults of war. Heyne attended his pupil to the Wittenberg University, and lived there a year; studying for his own behoof, chiefly in philosophy and German history, and with more profit, as he says, than of

old. Theresa and he kept up a correspondence, which often passed into melancholy and enthusiasm. The Prussian cannon drove him out of Wittenberg: his pupil and he witnessed the bombardment of the place from the neighbourhood; and, having waited till their University became 'a heap of rubbish,' had to retire elsewhither for accommodation. The young man subsequently went to Erlangen, then to Göttingen. Heyne remained again without employment, alone in Dresden. Theresa was living in his neighbourhood, lovely and sad as ever; but a new bombardment drove her also to a distance. She left her little property with Heyne; who removed it to his lodging, and determined to abide the Prussian siege, having indeed no other resource. The sack of cities looks so well on paper, that we must find a little space here for Heyne's account of his experience in this business; though it is none of the brightest accounts; and indeed contrasts but poorly with Rabener's brisk sarcastic narrative of the same adventure: for he too was cannonaded out of Dresden at this time, and lost house and home, and books and manuscripts, and all but good humour.

'The Prussians advanced meanwhile, and on the 18th of July (1760) the bombardment of Dresden began. Several nights I passed, in company with others, in a tavern, and the days in my room; so that I could hear the balls from the battery, as they flew through the streets, whizzing past my windows. An indifference to danger and to life took such possession of me, that on the last morning of the siege, I went early to bed, and, amid the frightfulest crashing of bombs and grenades, fell fast asleep of fatigue, and lay sound till midday. On awakening, I huddled-on my clothes, and ran down stairs, but found the whole house deserted. I had returned to my room, considering what I was to do, whither, at all events, I was to take my chest, when, with a tremendous crash, a bomb came down in the court of the house; did not, indeed, set fire to it, but on all sides shattered everything to pieces. The thought, that where one bomb fell, more would soon follow, gave me wings; I darted down stairs, found the house-door locked, ran to and fro; at last got entrance into one of the under-rooms, and sprang through the window into the street.

'Empty as the street where I lived had been, I found the principal thoroughfares crowded with fugitives. Amidst the whistling of balls, I ran along the Schlossgasse towards the Elbe-Bridge, and so forward to the Neustadt, out of which the Prussians had now been forced to retreat. Glad that I had leave to rest anywhere, I passed one part of the night on the floor of an empty house; the other, witnessing the frightful light of flying bombs and a burning city.

'At break of day, a little postern was opened by the Austrian guard,

to let the fugitives get out of the walls. The captain, in his insolence, called the people Lutheran dogs, and with this nickname gave each of us a stroke as we passed through the gate.

'I was now at large; and the thought, Whither bound? began for the first time to employ me. As I had run, indeed leapt from my house, in the night of terror, I had carried with me no particle of my property, and not a *groschen* of money. Only in hurrying along the street, I had chanced to see a tavern open; it was an Italian's, where I used to pass the nights. Here espying a fur cloak, I had picked it up, and thrown it about me. With this I walked along, in one of the sultriest days, from the Neustadt, over the sand and the moor, and took the road for Ænsdorf, where Theresa with her friend was staying; the mother-in-law of the latter being also on a visit to them. In the fiercest heat of the sun, through tracts of country silent and deserted, I walked four leagues to Bischofswerda, where I had to sleep in an inn among carriers. Towards midnight arrived a postillion with return-horses; I asked him to let me ride one; and with him I proceeded, till my road turned off from the highway. All day, I heard the shots at poor Dresden reëchoing in the hills.

'Curiosity at first made my reception at Ænsdorf very warm. But as I came to appear in the character of an altogether destitute man, the family could see in me only a future burden: no invitation to continue with them followed. In a few days came a chance of conveyance, by a wagon for Neustadt, to a certain Frau von Fletscher's a few miles on this side of it; I was favoured with some old linen for the road. The good Theresa suffered unspeakably under these proceedings: the noble lady, her friend, had not been allowed to act according to the dictates of her own heart.

'Not till now did I feel wholly how miserable I was. Spurning at destiny, and hardening my heart, I entered on this journey. With the Frau von Fletscher too my abode was brief; and by the first opportunity I returned to Dresden. There was still a possibility that my lodging might have been saved. With heavy heart I entered the city; hastened to the place where I had lived, and found—a heap of ashes.'

Heyne took up his quarters in the vacant rooms of the Brühl Library. Some friends endeavoured to alleviate his distress; but war and rumours of war continued to harass him, and drive him to and fro; and his Theresa, afterwards also a fugitive, was now as poor as himself. She heeded little the loss of her property; but inward sorrow and so many outward agitations preyed hard upon her; in the winter she fell violently sick at Dresden, was given up by her physicians; received extreme unction according to the rites of her church; and was for some hours believed to be dead. Nature, however, again prevailed: a crisis had occurred in the mind as well as in the

body; for with her first returning strength, Theresa declared her determination to renounce the Catholic, and publicly embrace the Protestant faith. Argument, representation of worldly disgrace and loss were unavailing: she could now, that all her friends were to be estranged, have little hope of being wedded to Heyne on earth; but she trusted that in another scene a like creed might unite them in a like destiny. He himself fell ill; and only escaped death by her nursing. Persisting the more in her purpose, she took priestly instruction, and on the 30th of May, in the Evangelical Schlosskirche, solemnly professed her new creed.

'Reverent admiration filled me,' says he, 'as I beheld the peace and steadfastness with which she executed her determination; and still more the courage with which she bore the consequences of it. She saw herself altogether cast out from her family; forsaken by her acquaintance, by every one; and by the fire deprived of all she had. Her courage exalted me to a higher duty, and admonished me to do mine. Imprudently I had, in former conversations, first awakened her religious scruples; the passion for me, which had so much increased her enthusiasm, increased her melancholy; even the secret thought of belonging more closely to me by sameness of belief had unconsciously influenced her. In a word, I formed the determination which could not but expose me to universal censure: helpless as I was, I united my destiny with hers. We were wedded at Ænsdorf, on the 4th of June, 1761.'

This was a bold step, but a right one: Theresa had now no stay but him; it behoved them to struggle, and if better might not be, to sink together. Theresa, in this narrative, appears to us a noble, interesting being; noble not in sentiment only, but in action and suffering; a fair flower trodden down by misfortune, but yielding, like flowers, only the sweeter perfume for being crushed, and which it would have been a blessedness to raise up and cherish into free growth. Yet, in plain prose, we must question whether the two were happier than others in their union: both were quick of temper; she was all a heavenly light, he in good part a hard terrestrial mass, which perhaps she could never wholly illuminate; the balance of the love seems to have lain much on her side. Nevertheless Heyne was a steadfast, true and kindly, if no ethereal man; he seems to have loved his wife honestly; and so, amid light and shadow, they made their pilgrimage together, if not better than other mortals, not worse, which was to have been feared.

Neither, for the present, did the pressure of distress weigh heavier on either than it had done before. He worked diligently, as he found scope, for his old Mæcenases, the Booksellers; the war-clouds grew lighter, or at least the young pair better used to them; friends also were kind, often assisting and hospitably entertaining them. On occasion of one such visit to the family of a Herr von Löben, there occurred a little trait, which for the sake of Theresa must not be omitted. Heyne and she had spent some happy weeks with their infant, in this country-house, when the alarm of war drove the Von Löbens from their residence, which with the management of its concerns they left to Heyne. He says, he gained some notion of 'land-economy' hereby; and Heeren states that he had 'a candle-manufactory' to oversee. But to our incident:

'Soon after the departure of the family, there came upon us an irruption of Cossacks,—disguised Prussians, as we subsequently learned. After drinking to intoxication in the cellars, they set about plundering. Pursued by them, I ran up stairs, and no door being open but that of the room where my wife was with her infant, I rushed into it. She arose courageously, and placed herself, with the child on her arm, in the door against the robbers. This courage saved me, and the treasure which lay hidden in the chamber.'

"O thou lioness!" said Attila Schmelzle, on occasion of a similar rescue, "why hast thou never been in any deadly peril, that I might show thee the lion in thy husband?"

But better days were dawning. 'On our return to Dresden,' says Heyne, 'I learned that inquiries had been made after me 'from Hanover; I knew not for what reason.' The reason by and by came to light. Gessner, Professor of Eloquence in Göttingen, was dead; and a successor was wanted. These things, it would appear, cause difficulties in Hanover, which in many other places are little felt. But the Prime Minister Münchhausen had as good as founded the Georgia Augusta himself; and he was wont to watch over it with singular anxiety. The noted and notorious Klotz was already there, as assistant to Gessner; 'but his beautiful latinity,' says Heeren, 'did not dazzle Münchhausen; Klotz, with his pugnacity, was not thought of.' The Minister applied to Ernesti for advice: Ernesti knew of no fit man in Germany; but recommended Rhunken of Leyden, or Saxe of Utrecht. Rhunken refused to leave his country, and added these words: 'But why do you seek out of Germany,

'what Germany itself offers you? Why not, for Gessner's successor, take Christian Gottlob Heyne, that true pupil of Ernesti, and man of fine talent (*excellenti virum ingenio*), who 'has shown how much he knows of Latin literature by his Tibullus; of Greek, by his Epictetus? In my opinion, and that 'of the greatest Hemsterhuis (*Hemsterhusii τοῦ πάνυ*), Heyne 'is the only one that can replace your Gessner. Nor let any 'one tell me that Heyne's fame is not sufficiently illustrious 'and extended. Believe me, there is in this man such a rich-'ness of genius and learning, that ere long all Europe will 'ring with his praises.'

This courageous and generous verdict of Rhunken's, in favour of a person as yet little known to the world, and to him known only by his writings, decided the matter. 'Münchhau-'sen,' says our Heeren, 'believed in the boldly prophesying 'man.' Not without difficulty Heyne was unearthed; and after various excuses on account of competence on his part,—for he had lost all his books and papers in the siege of Dresden, and sadly forgotten his Latin and Greek in so many tumults,—and various prudential negotiations about dismission from the Saxon service, and salary and privilege in the Hanoverian, he at length formally received his appointment; and some three months after, in June 1763, settled in Göttingen, with an official income of eight hundred *thalers;* which, it appears, was by several additions, in the course of time, increased to twelve hundred.

Here then had Heyne at last got to land. His long life was henceforth as quiet, and fruitful in activity and comfort, as the past period of it had been desolate and full of sorrows. He never left Göttingen, though frequently invited to do so, and sometimes with highly tempting offers;[6] but continued in his place, busy in his vocation; growing in influence, in extent of connexion at home and abroad; till Rhunken's prediction might almost be reckoned fulfilled to the letter; for Heyne in his own department was without any equal in Europe.

[6] He was invited successively to be Professor at Cassel, and at Klosterbergen; to be Librarian at Dresden; and, most flattering of all, to be *Prokanzler* in the University of Copenhagen, and virtual Director of Education over all Denmark. He had a struggle on this last occasion, but the Georgia Augusta again prevailed. Some increase of salary usually follows such refusals; it did not in this instance.

However, his history from this point, even because it was so happy for himself, must lose most of its interest for the general reader. Heyne has now become a Professor, and a regularly progressive man of learning; has a fixed household, has rents and comings in; it is easy to fancy how that man might flourish in calm sunshine of prosperity, whom in adversity we saw growing in spite of every storm. Of his proceedings in Göttingen, his reform of the Royal Society of Sciences, his editing of the *Gelehrte Anzeigen* (Gazette of Learning), his exposition of the Classics from Virgil to Pindar, his remodelling of the Library, his passive quarrels with Voss, his armed neutrality with Michaelis; of all this we may say little. The best fruit of his endeavours lies before the world, in a long series of Works, which among us, as well as elsewhere, are known and justly appreciated. On looking over them, the first thing that strikes us is astonishment at Heyne's diligence; which, considering the quantity and quality of his writings, might have appeared singular even in one who had been without other duties. Yet Heyne's office involved him in the most laborious researches: he wrote letters by the hundred to all parts of the world, and on all conceivable subjects; he had three classes to teach daily; he appointed professors, for his recommendation was all-powerful; superintended schools; for a long time the inspection of the *Freitische* was laid on him, and he had cooks' bills to settle, and hungry students to satisfy with his purveyance. Besides all which, he accomplished, in the way of publication, as follows:

In addition to his *Tibullus* and *Epictetus*, the first of which went through three, the second through two editions, each time with large extensions and improvements:

His Virgil (P. VIRGILIUS MARO *Varietate Lectionis et perpetuâ Annotatione illustratus*), in various forms, from 1767 to 1803; no fewer than six editions.

His Pliny (*Ex* C. PLINII SECUNDI *Historiâ Naturali excerpta, quæ ad Artes spectant*); two editions, 1790, 1811.

His Apollodorus (APOLLODORI *Atheniensis Bibliothecæ Libri tres*, &c.); two editions, 1787, 1803.

His Pindar (PINDARI *Carmina, cum Lectionis Varietate, curavit* Ch. G. H.); three editions, 1774, 1797, 1798, the last with the Scholia, the Fragments, a Translation, and Hermann's Inq. *De Metris*.

His Conon and Parthenius (CONONIS *Narrationes, et* PARTHENII *Narrationes amatoriæ*), 1798.

And lastly his Homer (HOMERI *Ilias, cum brevi Annotatione*); 8 volumes, 1802; and a second, contracted edition, in 2 volumes, 1804.

Next, almost a cartload of Translations; of which we shall mention only his version, said to be with very important improvements, of our *Universal History* by Guthrie and Gray.

Then some ten or twelve thick volumes of Prolusions, Eulogies, Essays; treating of all subjects, from the French Directorate to the *Chest of Cypselus*. Of these, Six Volumes are known in a separate shape, under the title of *Opuscula;* and contain some of Heyne's most valuable writings.

And lastly, to crown the whole with one most surprising item, seven thousand five hundred (Heeren says from seven to eight thousand) Reviews of Books, in the Göttingen *Gelehrte Anziegen*. Shame on us degenerate Editors! Here of itself was work for a lifetime!

To expect that elegance of composition should prevail in these multifarious performances were unreasonable enough. Heyne wrote very indifferent German; and his Latin, by much the more common vehicle in his learned works, flowed from him with a copiousness which could not be Ciceronian. At the same time, these volumes are not the folios of a Montfaucon, not mere classical ore and slag, but regularly smelted metal; for most part exhibiting the essence, and only the essence, of very great research; and enlightened by a philosophy which, if it does not always wisely order its results, has looked far and deeply in collecting them.

To have performed so much, evinces on the part of Heyne no little mastership in the great art of husbanding time. Heeren gives us sufficient details on this subject; explains Heyne's adjustment of his hours and various occupations: how he rose at five o'clock, and worked all the day, and all the year, with the regularity of a steeple clock; nevertheless, how patiently he submitted to interruptions from strangers, or extraneous business; how briefly, yet smoothly, he contrived to despatch such interruptions; how his letters were indorsed when they came to hand; and lay in a special drawer till they were answered: nay we have a description of his whole 'locality,' his bureau and book-shelves and portfolios, his very bed and strongbox

are not forgotten. To the busy man, especially the busy man of letters, these details are far from uninteresting; if we judged by the result, many of Heyne's arrangements might seem worthy not of notice only, but of imitation.

His domestic circumstances continued, on the whole, highly favourable for such activity; though not now more than formerly were they exempted from the common lot; but still had several hard changes to encounter. In 1775 he lost his Theresa, after long ill-health; an event which, stoic as he was, struck heavily and dolefully on his heart. He forbore not to shed some natural tears, though from eyes little used to the melting mood. Nine days after her death, he thus writes to a friend, with a solemn mournful tenderness, which none of us will deny to be genuine:

'I have looked upon the grave that covers the remains of my Theresa: what a thousandfold pang, beyond the pitch of human feeling, pierced through my soul! How did my limbs tremble as I approached this holy spot! Here, then, reposes what is left of the dearest that Heaven gave me; among the dust of her four children she sleeps. A sacred horror covered the place. I should have sunk altogether in my sorrow, had it not been for my two daughters that were standing on the outside of the churchyard; I saw their faces over the wall, directed to me with anxious fear. This called me to myself; I hastened in sadness from the spot where I could have continued forever: where it cheered me to think that one day I should rest by her side; rest from all the carking care, from all the griefs which so often have embittered to me the enjoyment of life. Alas! among these griefs must I reckon even her love, the strongest, truest, that ever inspired the heart of woman, which made me the happiest of mortals, and yet was a fountain to me of a thousand distresses, inquietudes and cares. To entire cheerfulness perhaps she never attained; but for what unspeakable sweetness, for what exalted enrapturing joys, is not Love indebted to Sorrow! Amidst gnawing anxieties, with the torture of anguish in my heart, I have been made even by the love which caused me this anguish, these anxieties, inexpressibly happy! When tears flowed over our cheeks, did not a nameless, seldom-felt delight stream through my breast, oppressed equally by joy and by sorrow!'

But Heyne was not a man to brood over past griefs, or linger long where nothing was to be done but mourn. In a short time, according to a good old plan of his, having reckoned up his grounds of sorrow, he fairly wrote down on paper, over against them, his 'grounds of consolation;' concluding with these pious words, 'So for all these sorrows too, these trials,

'do I thank thee, my God! And now, glorified friend, will I 'again turn me with undivided heart to my duty; thou thyself 'smilest approval on me!' Nay, it was not many months before a new marriage came on the anvil; in which matter, truly, Heyne conducted himself with the most philosophic indifference; leaving his friends, by whom the project had been started, to bring it to what issue they pleased. It was a scheme concerted by Zimmermann (the author of *Solitude*, a man little known to Heyne), and one Reich a Leipzig Bookseller, who had met at the Pyrmont Baths. Brandes, the Hanoverian Minister, successor of Münchhausen in the management of the University concerns, was there also with a daughter; upon her the projectors cast their eye. Heyne, being consulted, seems to have comported himself like clay in the hands of the potter; father and fair one, in like manner, were of a compliant humour, and thus was the business achieved; and on the 9th of April 1777, Heyne could take home a bride, won with less difficulty than most men have in choosing a pair of boots. Nevertheless, she proved an excellent wife to him; kept his house in the cheerfulest order; managed her step-children and her own like a true mother; and loved, and faithfully assisted her husband in whatever he undertook. Considered in his private relations, such a man might well reckon himself fortunate.

In addition to Heyne's claims as a scholar and teacher, Heeren would have us regard him as an unusually expert man of business and negotiator; for which line of life he himself seems, indeed, to have thought that his talent was more peculiarly fitted. In proof of this, we have long details of his procedure in managing the Library, the Royal Society, the University generally, and his incessant and often rather complex correspondence with Münchhausen, Brandes, or other ministers who presided over this department. Without detracting from Heyne's skill in such matters, what struck us more in this narrative of Heeren's was the singular contrast which the 'Georgia Augusta,' in its interior arrangement, as well as its external relations to the Government, exhibits with our own Universities. The prime minister of the country writes thrice weekly to the director of an institution for learning! He oversees all; knows the character, not only of every professor, but of every pupil that gives any promise. He is continually purchasing books, drawings, models; treating for this or the other help or advan-

tage to the establishment. He has his eye over all Germany; and nowhere does a man of any decided talent show himself, but he strains every nerve to acquire him. And seldom even can he succeed; for the Hanoverian assiduity seems nothing singular; every state in Germany has its minister for education, as well as Hanover. They correspond, they inquire, they negotiate; everywhere there seems a canvassing, less for places than for the best men to fill them. Heyne himself has his Seminarium, a private class of the nine most distinguished students in the University; these he trains with all diligence, and is in due time most probably enabled, by his connexions, to place in stations fit for them. A hundred and thirty-five professors are said to have been sent from this Seminarium during his presidency. These things we state without commentary: we believe that the experience of all English and Scotch and Irish University-men will, of itself, furnish one. The state of education in Germany, and the structure of the establishments for conducting it, seems to us one of the most promising inquiries that could at this moment be entered on.

But to return to Heyne. We have said, that in his private circumstances he might reckon himself fortunate. His public relations, on a more splendid scale, continued, to the last, to be of the same happy sort. By degrees, he had risen to be, both in name and office, the chief man of his establishment; his character stood high with the learned of all countries; and the best fruit of external reputation, increased respect in his own circle, was not denied to him. The burghers of Göttingen, so fond of their University, could not but be proud of Heyne; nay, as the time passed on, they found themselves laid under more than one specific obligation to him. He remodelled and reanimated their Gymnasium (Town-School), as he had before done that of Ilfeld; and what was still more important, in the rude times of the French War, by his skilful application, he succeeded in procuring from Napoleon, not only a protection for the University, but immunity from hostile invasion for the whole district it stands in. Nay, so happily were matters managed, or so happily did they turn of their own accord, that Göttingen rather gained than suffered by the War: under Jerome of Westphalia, not only were all benefices punctually paid, but improvements even were effected; among other things, a new and very handsome extension, which had long been desired, was built for the

Library, at the charge of Government. To all these claims for public regard, add Heyne's now venerable age, and we can fancy how, among his townsmen and fellow-collegians, he must have been cherished, nay almost worshipped. Already had the magistracy, by a special act, freed him from all public assessments; but in 1809, on his eightieth birthday, came a still more emphatic testimony; for Ritter Franz, and all the public Boards, and the Faculties *in corpore*, came to him in procession with good wishes; and students reverenced him; and young ladies sent him garlands, stitched together by their own fair fingers; in short, Göttingen was a place of jubilee; and good old Heyne, who nowise affected, yet could not dislike these things, was among the happiest of men.

In another respect we must also reckon him fortunate: that he lived till he had completed all his undertakings; and then departed peacefully, and without sickness, from which, indeed, his whole life had been remarkably free. Three months before his death, in April 1812, he saw the last Volume of his Works in print; and rejoiced, it is said, with an affecting thankfulness, that so much had been granted him. Length of life was not now to be hoped for; neither did Heyne look forward to the end with apprehension. His little German verses, and Latin translations, composed in sleepless nights, at this extreme period, are, to us, by far the most touching part of his poetry; so melancholy is the spirit of them, yet so mild; solemn, not without a shade of sadness, yet full of pious resignation. At length came the end; soft and gentle as his mother could have wished it for him. The 11th of July was a public day in the Royal Society; Heyne did his part in it; spoke at large, and with even more clearness and vivacity than usual.

'Next day,' says Heeren, 'was Sunday: I saw him in the evening for the last time. He was resting in his chair, exhausted by the fatigue of yesterday. On Monday morning, he once more entered his class-room, and held his Seminarium. In the afternoon he prepared his letters, domestic as well as foreign; among the latter, one on business; sealed them all but one, written in Latin, to Professor Thorlacius in Copenhagen, which I found open, but finished, on his desk. At supper (none but his elder daughter was with him) he talked cheerfully; and, at his usual time, retired to rest. In the night, the servant girl, that slept under his apartment, heard him walking up and down; a common practice with him when he could not sleep. However, he had again gone to bed. Soon after five, he arose, as usual; he joked with the

girl when she asked him how he had been overnight. She left him, to make ready his coffee, as was her wont; and, returning with it in a short quarter of an hour, she found him sunk down before his washing-stand, close by his work-table. His hands were wet; at the moment when he had been washing them, had death taken him into his arms. One breath more, and he ceased to live: when the hastening doctor opened a vein, no blood would flow.'

Heyne was interred with all public solemnities: and, in epicedial language, it may be said, without much exaggeration, that his country mourned for him. At Chemnitz, his birthplace, there assembled, under constituted authority, a grand meeting of the magnates, to celebrate his memory; the old school-album, in which the little ragged boy had inscribed his name, was produced; grandiloquent speeches were delivered; and 'in the afternoon, many hundreds went to see the poor cottage' where his father had weaved, and he starved and learned. How generous!

To estimate Heyne's intellectual character, to fix accurately his rank and merits as a critic and philologer, we cannot but consider as beyond our province, and at any rate superfluous here. By the general consent of the learned in all countries, he seems to be acknowledged as the first among recent scholars; his immense reading, his lynx-eyed skill in exposition and emendation are no longer anywhere controverted; among ourselves his taste in these matters has been praised by Gibbon, and by Parr pronounced to be 'exquisite.' In his own country, Heyne is even regarded as the founder of a new epoch in classical study; as the first who with any decisiveness attempted to translate fairly beyond the letter of the Classics; to read in the writings of the Ancients, not their language alone, or even their detached opinions and records, but their spirit and character, their way of life and thought; how the World and Nature painted themselves to the mind in those old ages; how, in one word, the Greeks and the Romans were men, even as we are. Such of our readers as have studied any one of Heyne's works, or even looked carefully into the *Lectures* of the Schlegels, the most ingenious and popular commentators of that school, will be at no loss to understand what we mean.

By his inquiries into antiquity, especially by his laboured investigation of its politics and its mythology, Heyne is believed

to have carried the torch of philosophy towards, if not into, the mysteries of old time. What Winkelmann, his great contemporary, did, or began to do, for ancient Plastic Art, the other with equal success began for ancient Literature.[7] A high praise, surely; yet, as we must think, one not unfounded, and which, indeed, in all parts of Europe, is becoming more and more confirmed.

So much, in the province to which he devoted his activity, is Heyne allowed to have accomplished. Nevertheless, we must not assert that, in point of understanding and spiritual endowment, he can be called a great, or even, in strict speech, a complete man. Wonderful perspicacity, unwearied diligence, are not denied him; but to philosophic order, to classical adjustment, clearness, polish, whether in word or thought, he seldom attains; nay, many times, it must be avowed, he involves himself in tortuous long-winded verbosities, and stands before us little better than one of that old school which his admirers boast that he displaced. He appears, we might also say, as if he had wings but could not well use them. Or indeed, it might be that, writing constantly in a dead language, he came to write heavily; working forever on subjects where learned armour-at-all-points cannot be dispensed with, he at last grew so habituated to his harness that he would not walk abroad without it; nay perhaps it had rusted together, and *could* not be unclasped! A sad fate for a thinker! Yet one which threatens many commentators, and overtakes many.

As a man encrusted and encased, he exhibits himself, moreover, to a certain degree, in his moral character. Here too, as in his intellect, there is an awkwardness, a cumbrous inertness;

[7] It is a curious fact, that these two men, so singularly correspondent in their early sufferings, subsequent distinction, line of study, and rugged enthusiasm of character, were at one time, while both as yet were under the horizon, brought into partial contact. 'An acquaintance of another sort,' says Heeren, 'the young Heyne was to make in the Brühl Library; with a 'person whose importance he could not then anticipate. One frequent visitor 'of this establishment was a certain almost wholly unknown man, whose 'visits could not be specially desirable for the librarians, such endless labour 'did he cost them. He seemed insatiable in reading; and called for so many 'books, that his reception there grew rather of the coolest. It was *Johann 'Winkelmann*. Meditating his journey for Italy, he was then laying-in pre-'paration for it. Thus did these two men become, if not confidential, yet 'acquainted; who at that time, both still in darkness and poverty, could 'little suppose, that in a few years they were to be the teachers of cultivated 'Europe, and the ornaments of their nation.'

nay, there is a show of dulness, of hardness, which nowise intrinsically belongs to him. He passed, we are told, for less religious, less affectionate, less enthusiastic than he was. His heart, one would think, had no free course, or had found itself a secret one; outwardly he stands before us cold and still, a very wall of rock; yet within lay a well, from which, as we have witnessed, the stroke of some Moses-wand (the death of a Theresa) could draw streams of pure feeling. Callous as the man seems to us, he has a sense for all natural beauty; a merciful sympathy for his fellow-men: his own early distresses never left his memory; for similar distresses his pity and help were, at all times, in store. This form of character may also be the fruit partly of his employments, partly of his sufferings, and perhaps is not very singular among commentators.

For the rest, Heeren assures us, that in practice Heyne was truly a good man; altogether just; diligent in his own honest business, and ever ready to forward that of others; compassionate; though quick-tempered, placable; friendly, and satisfied with simple pleasures. He delighted in roses, and always kept a bouquet of them in water on his desk. His house was embowered among roses; and in his old days he used to wander through the bushes with a pair of scissors. 'Farther,' says Heeren, 'in spite of his short sight, he was fond of the fields ' and skies, and could lie for hours reading on the grass.' A kindly old man! With strangers, hundreds of whom visited him, he was uniformly courteous; though latterly, being a little hard of hearing, less fit to converse. In society he strove much to be polite; but had a habit (which ought to be general) of yawning, when people spoke to him and said nothing.

On the whole, the Germans have some reason to be proud of Heyne: who shall deny that they have here once more produced a scholar of the right old stock; a man to be ranked, for honesty of study and of life, with the Scaligers, the Bentleys, and old illustrious men, who, though covered with academic dust and harsh with polyglot vocables, were true men of endeavour, and fought like giants, with such weapons as they had, for the good cause? To ourselves, we confess, Heyne, highly interesting for what he did, is not less but more so for what he was. This is another of the proofs, which minds like his are from time to time sent hither to give, that the man is not the product of his circumstances, but that, in a far higher

degree, the circumstances are the product of the man. While beneficed clerks and other sleek philosophers, reclining on their cushions of velvet, are demonstrating that to make a scholar and man of taste, there must be coöperation of the upper classes, society of gentlemen-commoners, and an income of four hundred a year;—arises the son of a Chemnitz weaver, and with the very wind of his stroke sweeps them from the scene. Let no man doubt the omnipotence of Nature, doubt the majesty of man's soul; let no lonely unfriended son of genius despair! Let him not despair; if he have the will, the right will, then the power also has not been denied him. It is but the artichoke that will not grow except in gardens. The acorn is cast carelessly abroad into the wilderness, yet it rises to be an oak; on the wild soil it nourishes itself, it defies the tempest, and lives for a thousand years.

GERMAN PLAYWRIGHTS.[1]

[1829.]

In this stage of society, the playwright is as essential and acknowledged a character as the millwright, or cartwright, or any other wright whatever; neither can we see why, in general estimation, he should rank lower than these his brother artisans, except perhaps for this one reason: that the former working in timber and iron, for the wants of the body, produce a completely suitable machine; while the latter, working in thought and feeling, for the wants of the soul, produces a machine which is *in*completely suitable. In other respects, we confess we cannot perceive that the balance lies against him: for no candid man, as it seems to us, will doubt but the talent which constructed a *Virginius* or a *Bertram*, might have sufficed, had it been properly directed, to make not only wheelbarrows and wagons, but even mills of considerable complicacy. However, if the public is niggardly to the playwright in one point, it must be proportionably liberal in another; according to Adam Smith's observation, that trades which are reckoned less reputable have higher money wages. Thus, one thing compensating the other, the playwright may still realise an existence; as, in fact, we find that he does: for playwrights were, are and probably will al-

[1] Foreign Review, No. 6.—1. *Die Ahnfrau* (The Ancestress). A Tragedy, in five Acts. By F. Grillparzer. Fourth Edition. Vienna, 1823.
König Ottokars Glück und Ende (King Ottocar's Fortune and End). A Tragedy, in five Acts. By F. Grillparzer. Vienna, 1825.
Sappho. A Tragedy, in five Acts. By F. Grillparzer. Third Edition, Vienna, 1822.
2. *Faust*. A Tragedy, in five Acts. By August Klingemann. Leipzig and Altenburg, 1815.
Ahasuer. A Tragedy, in five Acts. By August Klingemann. Brunswick, 1827.
3. *Müllners Dramatische Werke. Erste rechtmässige, vollständige und vom Verfasser verbesserte Gesammt-Ausgabe*. (Müllner's Dramatic Works. First legal collective Edition, complete and revised by the Author.) 7 vols. Brunswick, 1828.

ways be; unless, indeed, in process of years, the whole dramatic concern be finally abandoned by mankind; or, as in the case of our Punch and Mathews, every player becoming his own playwright, this trade may merge in the other and older one.

The British nation has its own playwrights, several of them cunning men in their craft: yet here, it would seem, this sort of carpentry does not flourish; at least, not with that preëminent vigour which distinguishes most other branches of our national industry. In hardware and cotton goods, in all sorts of chemical, mechanical, or other material processes, England outstrips the world; nay in many departments of literary manufacture also, as, for instance, in the fabrication of Novels, she may safely boast herself peerless: but in the matter of the Drama, to whatever cause it be owing, she can claim no such superiority. In theatrical produce she yields considerably to France; and is, out of sight, inferior to Germany. Nay, do not we English hear daily, for the last twenty years, that the Drama is dead, or in a state of suspended animation; and are not medical men sitting on the case, and propounding their remedial appliances, weekly, monthly, quarterly, to no manner of purpose? Whilst in Germany the Drama is not only, to all appearance, alive, but in the very flush and heyday of superabundant strength; indeed, as it were, still only sowing its first wild oats! For if the British Playwrights seem verging to ruin, and our Knowleses, Maturins, Shiels and Shees stand few and comparatively forlorn, like firs on an Irish bog, the Playwrights of Germany are a strong, triumphant body; so numerous that it has been calculated, in case of war, a regiment of foot might be raised, in which, from the colonel down to the drummer, every officer and private sentinel might show his drama or dramas.

To investigate the origin of so marked a superiority would lead us beyond our purpose. Doubtless the proximate cause must lie in a superior demand for the article of dramas; which superior demand again may arise either from the climate of Germany, as Montesquieu might believe; or perhaps more naturally and immediately from the political condition of that country; for man is not only a working but a talking animal, and where no Catholic Questions, and Parliamentary Reforms, and Select Vestries are given him to discuss in his leisure hours, he is glad to fall upon plays or players, or whatever comes to

hand, whereby to fence himself a little against the inroads of Ennui. Of the fact, at least, that such a superior demand for dramas exists in Germany, we have only to open a newspaper to find proof. Is not every *Litteraturblatt* and *Kunstblatt* stuffed to bursting with theatricals? Nay, has not the 'able Editor' established correspondents in every capital city of the civilised world, who report to him on this one matter and on no other? For, be our curiosity what it may, let us have profession of 'intelligence from Munich,' 'intelligence from Vienna,' 'intelligence from Berlin,' is it intelligence of anything but of green-room controversies and negotiations, of tragedies and operas and farces acted and to be acted? Not of men, and their doings, by hearth and hall, in the firm earth; but of mere effigies and shells of men, and their doings in the world of pasteboard, do these unhappy correspondents write. Unhappy we call them; for, with all our tolerance of playwrights, we cannot but think that there are limits, and very strait ones, within which their activity should be restricted. Here in England, our 'theatrical reports' are nuisance enough; and many persons who love their life, and therefore 'take care of their time, which is the 'stuff life is made of,' regularly lose several columns of their weekly newspaper in that way: but our case is pure luxury, compared with that of the Germans, who instead of a measurable and sufferable spicing of theatric matter, are obliged, metaphorically speaking, to breakfast and dine on it; have in fact nothing else to live on but that highly unnutritive victual. We ourselves are occasional readers of German newspapers; and have often, in the spirit of Christian humanity, meditated presenting to the whole body of German editors a project,—which, however, must certainly have ere now occurred to themselves, and for some reason been found inapplicable: it was, to address these correspondents of theirs, all and sundry, in plain language, and put the question, Whether, on studiously surveying the Universe from their several stations, there was nothing in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth, *nothing* visible but this one business, or rather shadow of business, that had an interest for the minds of men? If the correspondents still answered that nothing was visible, then of course they must be left to continue in this strange state; prayers, at the same time, being put up for them in all churches.

However, leaving every able Editor to fight his own battle, we address ourselves to the task in hand; meaning here to inquire a very little into the actual state of the dramatic trade in Germany, and exhibit some detached features of it to the consideration of our readers. For, seriously speaking, low as the province may be, it is a real, active and ever-enduring province of the literary republic; nor can the pursuit of many men, even though it be a profitless and foolish pursuit, ever be without claim to some attention from us, either in the way of furtherance or of censure and correction. Our avowed object is to promote the sound study of Foreign Literature; which study, like all other earthly undertakings, has its negative as well as its positive side. We have already, as occasion served, borne testimony to the merits of various German poets; and must now say a word on certain German poetasters; hoping that it may be chiefly a regard to the former which has made us take even this slight notice of the latter: for the bad is in itself of no value, and only worth describing lest it be mistaken for the good. At the same time, let no reader tremble, as if we meant to overwhelm him, on this occasion, with a whole mountain of dramatic lumber, poured forth in torrents, like shot rubbish, from the playhouse garrets, where it is mouldering and evaporating into nothing, silently and without harm to any one. Far be this from us! Nay, our own knowledge of this subject is in the highest degree limited; and, indeed, to exhaust it, or attempt discussing it with scientific precision, would be an impossible enterprise. What man is there that could assort the whole furniture of Milton's *Limbo of Vanity;* or where is the Hallam that would undertake to write us the Constitutional History of a Rookery? Let the courteous reader take heart, then; for he is in hands that will not, nay what is more, that cannot, do him much harm. One brief shy glance into this huge bivouac of Playwrights, all sawing and planing with such tumult; and we leave it, probably for many years.

The German Parnassus, as one of its own denizens remarks, has a rather broad summit; yet only two Dramatists are reckoned, within the last century, to have mounted thither: Schiller and Goethe; if we are not, on the strength of his *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Emilie Galotti*, to account Lessing also of the number. On the slope of the Mountain may be found a few stragglers of the same brotherhood; among these Tieck and

Maler Müller, firmly enough stationed at considerable elevations; while far below appear various honest persons climbing vehemently, but against precipices of loose sand, to whom we wish all speed. But the reader will understand that the bivouac we speak of, and are about to enter, lies not on the declivity of the Hill at all; but on the level ground close to the foot of it; the essence of a Playwright being that he works not in Poetry, but in Prose which more or less cunningly resembles it.

And here pausing for a moment, the reader observes that he is in a civilised country; for see, on the very boundary-line of Parnassus, rises a gallows with the figure of a man hung in chains! It is the figure of August von Kotzebue; and has swung there for many years, as a warning to all too-audacious Playwrights; who nevertheless, as we see, pay little heed to it. Ill-fated Kotzebue, once the darling of theatrical Europe! This was the prince of all Playwrights, and could manufacture Plays with a speed and felicity surpassing even Edinburgh Novels. For his muse, like other doves, hatched twins in the month; and the world gazed on them with an admiration too deep for mere words. What is all past or present popularity to this? Were not these Plays translated into almost every language of articulate-speaking men; acted, at least, we may literally say, in every theatre from Kamtschatka to Cadiz? Nay, did they not melt the most obdurate hearts in all countries; and, like the music of Orpheus, draw tears down iron cheeks? We ourselves have known the flintiest men, who professed to have wept over them, for the first time in their lives. So was it twenty years ago; how stands it today? Kotzebue, lifted up on the hollow balloon of popular applause, thought wings had been given him that he might ascend to the Immortals: gay he rose, soaring, sailing, as with supreme dominion; but in the rarer azure deep, his windbag burst asunder, or the arrows of keen archers pierced it; and so at last we find him a compound-pendulum, vibrating in the character of scarecrow, to guard from forbidden fruit! O ye Playwrights, and literary quacks of every feather, weep over Kotzebue, and over yourselves! Know that the loudest roar of the million is not fame; that the windbag, are ye mad enough to mount it, *will* burst, or be shot through with arrows, and your bones too shall act as scarecrows.

But, quitting this idle allegorical vein, let us at length proceed in plain English, and as beseems mere prose Reviewers,

to the work laid out for us. Among the hundreds of German Dramatists, as they are called, three individuals, already known to some British readers, and prominent from all the rest in Germany, may fitly enough stand here as representatives of the whole Playwright class; whose various craft and produce the procedure of these three may in some small degree serve to illustrate. Of Grillparzer, therefore, and Klingemann, and Müllner, in their order.

Franz Grillparzer seems to be an Austrian; which country is reckoned nowise fertile in poets; a circumstance that may perhaps have contributed a little to his own rather rapid celebrity. Our more special acquaintance with Grillparzer is of very recent date; though his name and samples of his ware have for some time been hung out, in many British and foreign Magazines, often with testimonials which might have beguiled less timeworn customers. Neither, after all, have we found these testimonials falser than other such are, but rather not so false; for, indeed, Grillparzer is a most inoffensive man, nay positively rather meritorious; nor is it without reluctance that we name him under this head of Playwrights, and not under that of Dramatists, which he aspires to. Had the law with regard to mediocre poets relaxed itself since Horace's time, all had been well with Grillparzer; for undoubtedly there *is* a small vein of tenderness and grace running through him; a seeming modesty also, and real love of his art, which gives promise of better things. But gods and men and columns are still equally rigid in that unhappy particular of mediocrity, even pleasing mediocrity; and no scene or line is yet known to us of Grillparzer's which exhibits anything more. *Non concessere*, therefore, is his sentence for the present; and the louder his well-meaning admirers extol him, the more emphatically should it be pronounced and repeated. Nevertheless Grillparzer's claim to the title of Playwright is perhaps more his misfortune than his crime. Living in a country where the Drama engrosses so much attention, he has been led into attempting it, without any decisive qualification for such an enterprise; and so his allotment of talent, which might have done good service in some prose department, or even in the sonnet, elegy, song or other outlying province of Poetry, is driven, as it were, in spite of fate, to write Plays; which, though regularly divided into scenes

and separate speeches, are essentially monological; and though swarming with characters, too often express only one character, and that no very extraordinary one,—the character of Franz Grillparzer himself. What is an increase of misfortune too, he has met with applause in this career; which therefore he is likely to follow farther and farther, let nature and his stars say to it what they will.

The characteristic of a Playwright is, that he writes in Prose; which Prose he palms, probably first on himself, and then on the simpler part of the public, for Poetry: and the manner in which he effects this legerdemain constitutes his specific distinction, fixes the species to which he belongs in the genus Playwright. But it is a universal feature of him that he attempts, by prosaic, and as it were mechanical means, to accomplish an end which, except by poetical genius, is absolutely not to be accomplished. For the most part, he has some knack, or trick of the trade, which by close inspection can be detected, and so the heart of his mystery be seen into. He may have one trick, or many; and the more cunningly he can disguise these, the more perfect is he as a craftsman; for were the public once to penetrate into this his sleight-of-hand, it were all over with him,—Othello's occupation were gone. No conjuror, when we once understand his method of fire-eating, can any longer pass for a true thaumaturgist, or even entertain us in his proper character of quack, though he should eat Mount Vesuvius itself. But happily for Playwrights and others, the public is a dim-eyed animal; gullible to almost all lengths,—nay, which often seems to prefer being gulled.

Of Grillparzer's peculiar knack and recipe for play-making, there is not very much to be said. He seems to have tried various kinds of recipes, in his time; and, to his credit be it spoken, seems little contented with any of them. By much the worst Play of his, that we have seen, is the *Ahnfrau* (Ancestress); a deep tragedy of the Castle-Spectre sort; the whole mechanism of which was discernible and condemnable at a single glance. It is nothing but the old story of Fate; an invisible Nemesis visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation; a method almost as common and sovereign in German Art, at this day, as the method of steam is in British mechanics; and of which we shall anon have more occasion to speak. In his Preface, Grillparzer

endeavours to palliate or deny the fact of his being a *Schicksal-Dichter* (Fate-Tragedian); but to no purpose; for it is a fact grounded on the testimony of the seven senses: however, we are glad to observe that, with this one trial, he seems to have abandoned the Fate-line, and taken into better, at least into different ones. With regard to the *Ahnfrau* itself, we may remark that few things struck us so much as this little observation of Count Borotin's occurring in the middle of the dismalest night-thoughts, so unexpectedly, as follows:

BERTHA.

* * * *

Und der Himmel, sternelos,
Starrt aus leeren Augenhöhlen
In das ungeheure Grab
Schwarz herab!

GRAF.

Wie sich doch die Stunden dehnen!
Was ist wohl die Glocke, Bertha?

BERTHA (*is just condoling with him, in these words*):

* * * *

And the welkin, starless,
Glares from empty eye-holes,
Black, down on that boundless grave!

COUNT.

How the hours do linger!
What o'clock is't, prithee, Bertha?

A more delicate turn, we venture to say, is rarely to be met with in tragic dialogue.

As to the story of the *Ahnfrau*, it is, naturally enough, of the most heart-rending description. This Ancestress is a lady, or rather the ghost of a lady, for she has been defunct some centuries, who in life had committed what we call an 'indiscretion;' which indiscretion the unpolite husband punished, one would have thought sufficiently, by running her through the body. However, the *Schicksal* of Grillparzer does not think it sufficient; but farther dooms the fair penitent to walk as goblin, till the last branch of her family be extinct. Accordingly she is heard, from time to time, slamming doors and the like, and now and then seen with dreadful goggle-eyes and other

ghost-appurtenances, to the terror not only of servant people, but of old Count Borotin, her now sole male descendant, whose afternoon nap she, on one occasion, cruelly disturbs. This Count Borotin is really a worthy prosing old gentleman; only he had a son long ago drowned in a fishpond (body not found); and has still a highly accomplished daughter, whom there is none offering to wed, except one Jaromir, a person of unknown extraction, and to all appearance of the lightest purse; nay, as it turns out afterwards, actually the head of a Banditti establishment, which had long infested the neighbouring forests. However, a Captain of foot arrives at this juncture, utterly to root-out these Robbers; and now the strangest things come to light. For who should this Jaromir prove to be but poor old Borotin's drowned son; not drowned, but stolen and bred up by these Outlaws; the brother, therefore, of his intended; a most truculent fellow, who fighting for his life unwittingly kills his own father, and drives his bride to poison herself; in which wise, as was also Giles Scroggins' case, he 'cannot get married.' The reader sees, all this is not to be accomplished without some jarring and tumult. In fact, there is a frightful uproar everywhere throughout that night; robbers dying, musketry discharging, women shrieking, men swearing, and the Ahnfrau herself emerging at intervals, as the genius of the whole discord. But time and hours bring relief, as they always do. Jaromir in the long-run likewise succeeds in dying; whereupon the whole Borotin lineage having gone to the devil, the Ancestress also retires thither,—at least makes the upper world rid of her presence; and the piece ends in deep stillness. Of this poor Ancestress we shall only say farther: Wherever she be, *requiescat! requiescat!*

As we mentioned above, the Fate-method of manufacturing tragic emotion seems to have yielded Grillparzer himself little contentment; for after this *Ahnfrau*, we hear no more of it. His *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (King Ottocar's Fortune and End) is a much more innocent piece, and proceeds in quite a different strain; aiming to subdue us not by old-women's fables of Destiny, but by the accumulated splendour of thrones and principalities, the cruel or magnanimous pride of Austrian Emperors and Bohemian conquerors, the wit of chivalrous courtiers, and beautiful but shrewish queens; the whole set-off by a proper intermixture of coronation-ceremonies, Hungarian

dresses, whiskered halberdiers, alarms of battle, and the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. There is even some attempt at delineating character in this Play: certain of the *dramatis personæ* are evidently meant to differ from certain others, not in dress and name only, but in nature and mode of being; so much indeed they repeatedly assert, or hint, and do their best to make good,—unfortunately, however, with very indifferent success. In fact, these *dramatis personæ* are rubrics and titles rather than persons; for most part, mere theatrical automata, with only a mechanical existence. The truth of the matter is, Grillparzer cannot communicate a poetic life to any character or object; and in this, were it in no other way, he evinces the intrinsically prosaic nature of his talent. These personages of his have, in some instances, a certain degree of metaphysical truth; that is to say, one portion of their structure, psychologically viewed, corresponds with the other;—so far all is well enough: but to unite these merely scientific and inanimate *qualities* into a living *man* is work not for a Playwright, but for a Dramatist. Nevertheless, *König Ottokar* is comparatively a harmless tragedy. It is full of action, striking enough, though without any discernible coherence; and with so much both of flirting and fighting, with so many weddings, funerals, processions, encampments, it must be, we should think, if the tailor and decorationist do their duty, a very comfortable piece to see acted; especially on the Vienna boards, where it has a national interest, Rodolph of Hapsburg being a main personage in it.

The model of this *Ottokar* we imagine to have been Schiller's *Piccolomini;* a poem of similar materials and object; but differing from it as a living rose from a mass of dead roseleaves, or even of broken Italian gumflowers. It seems as though Grillparzer had hoped to subdue us by a sufficient multitude of wonderful scenes and circumstances, without inquiring, with any painful solicitude, whether the soul and meaning of them were presented to us or not. Herein truly, we believe, lies the peculiar knack or playwright-mystery of *Ottokar:* that its effect is calculated to depend chiefly on its quantity; on the mere number of astonishments, and joyful or deplorable adventures there brought to light; abundance in superficial contents compensating the absence of selectness and *callida junctura.* Which second method of tragic manufacture we hold to be better than the first, but still far from good. At the same time it is a very

common method, both in Tragedy and elsewhere; nay, we hear persons whose trade it is to write metre, or be otherwise 'imaginative,' professing it openly as the best they know. Do not these men go about collecting 'features;' ferreting-out strange incidents, murders, duels, ghost-apparitions, over the habitable globe? Of which features and incidents when they have gathered a sufficient stock, what more is needed than that they *be* ample enough, high-coloured enough, though huddled into any case (Novel, Tragedy or Metrical Romance) that will hold them all? Nevertheless this is agglomeration, not creation; and avails little in Literature. Quantity, it is a certain fact, will *not* make-up for defect of quality; nor are the gayest hues of any service, unless there be a likeness painted from them. Better were it for *König Ottokar* had the story been twice as short and twice as expressive. For it is still true, as in Cervantes' time, *nunca lo bueno fué mucho*. What avails the dram of brandy, while it swims chemically united with its barrel of wort? Let the distiller pass it and repass it through his limbecs; for it is the drops of pure alcohol that we want, not the gallons of water, which may be had in every ditch.

On the whole, however, we remember *König Ottokar* without animosity; and to prove that Grillparzer, if he could not make it poetical, might have made it less prosaic, and has in fact something better in him than is here manifested, we shall quote one passage, which strikes us as really rather sweet and natural. King Ottokar is in the last of his fields, no prospect before him but death or captivity; and soliloquising on his past misdeeds:

> I have not borne me wisely in thy World,
> Thou great, all-judging God! Like storm and tempest,
> I traversed thy fair garden, wasting it:
> 'Tis thine to waste, for thou alone canst heal.
> Was evil not my aim, yet how did I,
> Poor worm, presume to ape the Lord of Worlds,
> And through the Bad seek out a way to the Good!
>
> My fellow-man, sent thither for his joy,
> An End, a Self, within thy World a World,—
> For thou hast fashioned him a marvellous work,
> With lofty brow, erect in look, strange sense,
> And clothed him in the garment of thy Beauty,
> And wondrously encircled him with wonders;
> He hears, and sees, and feels, has pain and pleasure;

He takes him food, and cunning powers come forth,
And work and work, within their secret chambers,
And build him up his House: no royal Palace
Is comparable to the frame of Man!
And I have cast them forth from me by thousands,
For whims, as men throw rubbish from their door.
And none of all these slain but had a Mother
Who, as she bore him in sore travail,
Had clasped him fondly to her fostering breast;
A Father who had blessed him as his pride,
And nurturing, watched over him long years:
If he but hurt the skin upon his finger,
There would they run, with anxious look, to bind it,
And tend it, cheering him, until it healed;
And it was but a finger, the skin o' the finger!
And I have trod men down in heaps and squadrons,
For the stern iron op'ning out a way
To their warm living hearts.—O God,
Wilt thou go into judgment with me, spare
My suffering people.[2]

Passages of this sort, scattered here and there over Grillparzer's Plays, and evincing at least an amiable tenderness of natural disposition, make us regret the more to condemn him. In fact, we have hopes that he is not born to be forever a Playwright. A true though feeble vein of poetic talent he really seems to possess; and such purity of heart as may yet, with assiduous study, lead him into his proper field. For we do reckon him a conscientious man, and honest lover of Art; nay this incessant fluctuation in his dramatic schemes is itself a good omen. Besides this *Ahnfrau* and *Ottokar*, he has written two dramas, *Sappho* and *Der Goldene Vliess* (The Golden Fleece), on quite another principle; aiming apparently at some Classic model, or at least at some French reflex of such a model. *Sappho*, which we are sorry to learn is not his last piece, but his second, appears to us very considerably the most faultless production of his we are yet acquainted with. There is a degree of grace and simplicity in it, a softness, polish and general good taste, little to be expected from the author of the *Ahnfrau:* if he cannot bring out the full tragic meaning of Sappho's situation, he contrives, with laudable dexterity, to avoid the ridicule that lies within a single step of it; his Drama is weak and thin, but innocent, lovable; nay the last scene strikes us as even

[2] *König Ottokar*, 1810-1.

poetically meritorious. His *Goldene Vliess* we suspect to be of similar character, but have not yet found time and patience to study it. We repeat our hope of one day meeting Grillparzer in a more honourable calling than this of Playwright, or even fourth-rate Dramatist; which titles, as was said above, we have not given him without regret; and shall be truly glad to cancel for whatever better one he may yet chance to merit.

But if we felt a certain reluctance in classing Grillparzer among the Playwrights, no such feeling can have place with regard to the second name on our list, that of Doctor August Klingemann. Dr. Klingemann is one of the most indisputable Playwrights now extant; nay so superlative is his vigour in this department, we might even designate him *the* Playwright. His manner of proceeding is quite different from Grillparzer's; not a wavering ever-changed method, or combination of methods, as the other's was; but a fixed principle of action, which he follows with unflinching courage; his own mind being to all appearance highly satisfied with it. If Grillparzer attempted to overpower us, now by the method of Fate, now by that of pompous action, and grandiloquent or lachrymose sentiment, heaped on us in too rich abundance, Klingemann, without neglecting any of these resources, seems to place his chief dependence on a surer and readier stay,—on his magazines of rosin, oil-paper, vizards, scarlet-drapery and gunpowder. What thunder and lightning, magic-lantern transparencies, death's-heads, fire-showers and plush-cloaks can do, is here done. Abundance of churchyard and chapel-scenes, in the most tempestuous weather; to say nothing of battle-fields, gleams of scoured arms here and there in the wood, and even occasional shots heard in the distance. Then there are such scowls and malignant side-glances, ashy palenesses, stampings and hysterics, as might, one would think, wring the toughest bosom into drops of pity. For not only are the looks and gestures of these people of the most heart-rending description, but their words and feelings also (for Klingemann is no half-artist) are of a piece with them: gorgeous inflations, the purest innocence, highest magnanimity; god-like sentiment of all sorts; everywhere the finest tragic humour. The moral too is genuine; there is the most anxious regard to virtue; indeed a distinct patronage both of Providence and the Devil. In this manner does Dr. Klingemann compound his

dramatic electuaries, no less cunningly than Dr. Kitchiner did his 'peptic persuaders;' and truly of the former we must say, that their operation is nowise unpleasant; nay to our shame be it spoken, we have even read these Plays with a certain degree of satisfaction; and shall declare that if any man wish to amuse himself irrationally, here is the ware for his money.

Klingemann's latest dramatic undertaking is *Ahasuer;* a purely original invention, on which he seems to pique himself somewhat; confessing his opinion that, now when the 'birth-pains' are over, the character of *Ahasuer* may possibly do good service in many a future drama. We are not prophets, or sons of prophets; so shall leave this prediction resting on its own basis. Ahasuer, the reader will be interested to learn, is no other than the Wandering Jew or Shoemaker of Jerusalem: concerning whom there are two things to be remarked. The first is, the strange name of the Shoemaker: why do Klingemann and all the Germans call the man *Ahasuer*, when his authentic Christian name is John; *Joannes a Temporibus Christi*, or, for brevity's sake, simply *Joannes a Temporibus?* This should be looked into. Our second remark is of the circumstance that no Historian or Narrator, neither Schiller, Strada, Thuanus, Monro, nor Dugald Dalgetty, makes any mention of Ahasuer's having been present at the Battle of Lützen. Possibly they thought the fact too notorious to need mention. Here, at all events, he was; nay, as we infer, he must have been at Waterloo also; and probably at Trafalgar, though in which Fleet is not so clear; for he takes a hand in all great battles and national emergencies, at least is witness of them, being bound to it by his destiny. Such is the peculiar occupation of the Wandering Jew, as brought to light in this Tragedy: his other specialities,—that he cannot lodge above three nights in one place; that he is of a melancholic temperament; above all, that he cannot die, not by hemp or steel, or Prussic-acid itself, but must travel on till the general consummation,—are familiar to all historical readers. Ahasuer's task at this Battle of Lützen seems to have been a very easy one: simply to see the Lion of the North brought down; not by a cannon-shot, as is generally believed, but by the traitorous pistol-bullet of one Heinyn von Warth, a bigoted Catholic, who had pretended to desert from the Imperialists, that he might find some such opportunity. Unfortunately, Heinyn, directly after this feat, falls into a sleep-

less, half-rabid state; comes home to Castle Warth, frightens his poor Wife and worthy old noodle of a Father; then skulks about, for some time, now praying, oftener cursing and swearing; till at length the Swedes lay hold of him and kill him. Ahasuer, as usual, is in at the death: in the interim, however, he has saved Lady Heinyn from drowning, though as good as poisoned her with the look of his strange stony eyes; and now his business to all appearance being over, he signifies in strong language that he must begone; thereupon he 'steps solemnly 'into the wood; Wasaburg looks after him surprised: the rest 'kneel round the corpse; the *Requiem* faintly continues;' and what is still more surprising, 'the curtain falls.' Such is the simple action and stern catastrophe of this Tragedy; concerning which it were superfluous for us to speak farther in the way of criticism. We shall only add, that there is a dreadful lithographic print in it, representing 'Ludwig Devrient as Ahasuer;' in that very act of 'stepping solemnly into the wood;' and uttering these final words: "*Ich aber wandle weiter—weiter—weiter!*" We have heard of Herr Devrient as of the best actor in Germany; and can now bear testimony, if there be truth in this plate, that he is one of the ablest-bodied men. A most truculent, rawboned figure, 'with bare legs and red-leather shoes;' huge black beard; eyes turned inside out; and uttering these extraordinary words: "But *I* go on—on—on!"

Now, however, we must give a glance at Klingemann's other chief performance in this line, the Tragedy of *Faust*. Dr. Klingemann admits that the subject has been often treated; that Goethe's *Faust* in particular has 'dramatic points (*dramatische Momente*):' but the business is to give it an entire dramatic superficies, to make it an *ächt dramatische*, a 'genuinely dramatic' tragedy. Setting out with this laudable intention, Dr. Klingemann has produced a *Faust*, which differs from that of Goethe in more than one particular. The hero of this piece is not the old Faust, doctor in philosophy; driven desperate by the uncertainty of human knowledge; but plain John Faust, the printer, and even the inventor of gunpowder; driven desperate by his ambitious temper, and a total deficiency of cash. He has an excellent wife, an excellent blind father, both of whom would fain have him be peaceable, and work at his trade; but being an adept in the black-art he determines rather to relieve himself in that way. Accordingly, he proceeds to make a con-

tract with the Devil, on what we should consider pretty advantageous terms; the Devil being bound to serve him in the most effectual manner, and Faust at liberty to commit *four* mortal sins before any hair of his head can be harmed. However, as will be seen, the Devil proves Yorkshire; and Faust, naturally enough, finds himself quite jockeyed in the long-run.

Another characteristic distinction of Klingemann is his manner of embodying this same Evil Principle, when at last he resolves on introducing him to sight; for all these contracts and preliminary matters are very properly managed behind the scenes; only the main points of the transaction being indicated to the spectator by some thunderclap, or the like. Here is no cold mocking Mephistopheles; but a swaggering, jovial, West-India-looking 'Stranger,' with a rubicund, indeed quite brick-coloured face, which Faust at first mistakes for the effect of hard-drinking. However, it is a remarkable feature of this Stranger, that always on the introduction of any religious topic, or the mention of any sacred name, he strikes his glass down on the table, and generally breaks it.

For some time, after his grand bargain, Faust's affairs go on triumphantly, on the great scale, and he seems to feel pretty comfortable. But the Stranger shows him 'his wife,' Helena, the most enchanting creature in the world; and the most cruel-hearted,—for, notwithstanding the easy temper of her husband, she will not grant Faust the smallest encouragement, till he have killed Käthe, his own living helpmate, against whom he entertains no manner of grudge. Nevertheless, reflecting that he has a stock of four mortal sins to draw upon, and may well venture one for such a prize, he determines on killing Käthe. But here matters take a bad turn: for having poisoned poor Käthe, he discovers, most unexpectedly, that she is in the family-way; and therefore that he has committed not one sin but two! Nay, before the interment can take place, he is farther reduced, in a sort of accidental self-defence, to kill his father; thus accomplishing his third mortal sin; with which third, as we shall presently discover, his whole allotment is exhausted; a fourth, that he knew not of, being already on the score against him! From this point, it cannot surprise us that bad grows worse: catchpoles are out in pursuit of him, 'black masks' dance round him in a most suspicious manner, the brickfaced Stranger seems to laugh at him, and Helena will nowhere make her appear-

ance. That the sympathising reader may see with his own eyes how poor Faust is beset at this juncture, we shall quote a scene or two. The first may, properly enough, be that of those 'black masks.'

Scene VII.

A lighted Hall.

In the distance is heard quick dancing-music. Masks pass from time to time over the Stage, but all dressed in black, and with vizards perfectly close. After a pause, Faust plunges wildly in, with a full goblet in his hand.

Faust [*rushing stormfully into the foreground*].
Ha! Poison, 'stead of wine, that I intoxicate me!
Your wine makes sober,—burning fire bring us!
Off with your drink!—and blood is in it too!
[*Shuddering, he dashes the goblet from his hand.*
My father's blood,—I've drunk my fill of *that!*
[*With increasing tumult.*
Yet curses on him! curses, that he begot me!
Curse on my mother's bosom, that it bore me!
Curse on the gossip-crone that stood by her,
And did not strangle me at my first scream!
How could I help this being that was given me?
Accursed art thou, Nature, that hast mock'd me!
Accursed I, that let myself be mock'd!—
And Thou, strong Being, that, to make thee sport,
Enclosedst the fire-soul in this dungeon,
That so despairing it might strive for freedom—
Accur. . . [*He shrinks terrorstruck.*
No, not the *fourth*. . . . the blackest sin!
No! no! [*In the excess of his outbreaking anguish, he hides his face in his hands.*
O, I am altogether wretched!

Three black Masks come towards him.

First Mask. Hey! merry friend!
Second Mask. Hey! merry brother!
Third Mask [*reiterating with a cutting tone*]. Merry!
Faust [*breaking out in wild humour, and looking round among them*]. Hey! merry, then!
First Mask. Will any one catch flies?
Second Mask. A long life yet;—to midnight all the way!
Third Mask. And after that, such pleasure without end!
[*The music suddenly ceases, and a clock strikes thrice.*
Faust [*astonished*]. What is it?
First Mask. Wants a quarter, Sir, of twelve!

SECOND MASK. Then we have time!
THIRD MASK. Ay, time enough for jigging!
FIRST MASK. And not till midnight comes the shot to pay!
FAUST [*shuddering*]. What want ye?
FIRST MASK [*clasps his hand abruptly*].
Hey! To dance a step with thee!
FAUST [*plucks his hands back*]. Off!—Fire!!
FIRST MASK. Tush! A spark or so of brimstone!
SECOND MASK. Art dreaming, brother?
THIRD MASK. Holla! Music, there!
[*The music begins again in the distance.*
FIRST MASK [*secretly laughing*]. The spleen is biting him!
SECOND MASK. Hark! at the gallows,
What jovial footing of it!
THIRD MASK. Thither must I! [*Exit.*
FIRST MASK. Below, too! down in Purgatory! Hear ye?
SECOND MASK. A stirring *there?* 'Tis time, then! Hui, your servant!
FIRST MASK [*to Faust*]. Till midnight!
[*Exeunt both Masks hastily.*
FAUST [*clasping his brow*]. Ha! What begirds me here?
[*Stepping vehemently forward.*
Down with your masks! [*Violent knocking without.*
What horrid uproar next!
Is madness coming on me?—
VOICE [*violently from without*]. Open, in the King's name!
[*The music ceases. Thunderclap.*
FAUST. [*staggers back*].
I have a heavy dream!—Sure *'tis* not doomsday?
VOICE [*as before*]. Here is the murderer! Open! Open, then!
FAUST [*wipes his brow*]. Has agony unmanned me?—

SCENE VIII.

BAILIFFS. Where is he? where?—

From these merely terrestrial constables the jovial Stranger easily delivers Faust: but now comes the long-looked-for *tête-à-tête* with Helena.

SCENE XII.

Faust leads Helena on the stage. She also is close-masked. The other Masks withdraw.

FAUST [*warm and glowing*]. No longer strive, proud beauty!
HELENA. Ha, wild stormer!
FAUST. My bosom burns—!
HELENA. The time is not yet come.—

—And so forth, through four pages of flame and ice, till at last,

FAUST [*insisting*]. Off with the mask, then!
HELENA [*still wilder*]. Hey! the marriage-hour!—
FAUST. Off with the mask!!
HELENA. 'Tis striking!!
FAUST. One kiss!
HELENA. Take it!!
[*The mask and head-dress fall from her; and she grins at him from a death's-head: loud thunder; and the music ends, as with a shriek, in dissonances.*
FAUST [*staggers back*]. O horror!—Woe!
HELENA. The couch is ready, there!
Come, Bridegroom, to thy fire-nuptials!
[*She sinks, with a crashing thunderpeal, into the ground, out of which issue flames.*

All this is bad enough; but mere child's-play to the 'Thirteenth Scene,' the last of this strange eventful history: with some parts of which we propose to send our readers weeping to their beds.

SCENE XIII.

The Stranger hurls Faust, whose face is deadly pale, back to the stage, by the hair.

FAUST. Ha, let me fly!—Come! Come!
STRANGER [*with wild thundering tone*]. 'Tis over now!
FAUST. That horrid visage!—
[*Throwing himself, in a tremor, on the Stranger's breast.*
Thou art my Friend!
Protect me!!
STRANGER [*laughing aloud*]. Ha! ha! ha!
* * * * *
FAUST. O, save me!!
STRANGER [*clutches him with irresistible force; whirls him round, so that Faust's face is towards the spectators, whilst his own is turned away; and thus he looks at him, and bawls with thundering voice*]. 'Tis I!!—
[*A clap of thunder. Faust, with gestures of deepest horror, rushes to the ground, uttering an inarticulate cry. The other, after a pause, continues, with cutting coolness:*
Is that the mighty Hell-subduer,
That threatened *me*?—Ha, ME!! [*With highest contempt.*
Worm of the dust!

I had reserved thy torment for—*myself ! !*—
Descend to other hands, be sport for slaves—
Thou art too small for me ! !

FAUST [*rises erect, and seems to recover his strength*].
Am not I Faust ?

STRANGER. Thou, no !

FAUST [*rising in his whole vehemence*].
Accursed ! Ha, I am ! I am !
Down at my feet !—I am thy master !

STRANGER. No more ! !

FAUST [*wildly*]. More ? Ha ! My Bargain ! !

STRANGER. Is concluded !

FAUST. *Three* mortal sins.—

STRANGER. The Fourth too is committed !

FAUST. My Wife, my Child, and my old Father's blood— !

STRANGER [*holds up a Parchment to him*]. And here *thy own !*—

FAUST. That is my covenant !

STRANGER. This *signature*—was thy most damning sin !

FAUST [*raging*]. Ha, spirit of lies ! ! &c. &c.

* * * * * *

STRANGER [*in highest fury*]. Down, thou accursed !

[*He drags him by the hair towards the background ; at this moment, amid violent thunder and lightning, the scene changes into a horrid wilderness ; in the background of which, a yawning Chasm : into this the Devil hurls Faust ; on all sides fire rains down, so that the whole interior of the Cavern seems burning : a black veil descends over both, so soon as Faust is got under.*

FAUST. [*huzzaing in wild defiance*]. Ha, down ! Down !

[*Thunder, lightning, and fire. Both sink, the curtain falls.*

On considering all which supernatural transactions, the bewildered reader has no theory for it, except that Faust must, in Dr. Cabanis's phrase, have laboured under 'obstructions in the epigastric region,' and all this of the Devil, and Helena, and so much murder and carousing, have been nothing but a waking dream, or other atrabilious phantasm; and regrets that the poor Printer had not rather applied to some Abernethy on the subject, or even, by one sufficient dose of Epsom-salt, on his own prescription, put an end to the whole matter, and restored himself to the bosom of his afflicted family.

Such, then, for Dr. Klingemann's part, is his method of constructing Tragedies; to which method it may perhaps be objected that there is a want of originality in it; for do not our own British Playwrights follow precisely the same plan? We

might answer that, if not his plan, at least his infinitely superior execution of it must distinguish Klingemann: but we rather think his claim to originality rests on a different ground; on the ground, namely, of his entire contentment with himself and with this his dramaturgy; and the cool heroism with which, on all occasions, he avows that contentment. Here is no poor cowering underfoot Playwright, begging the public for God's sake not to give him the whipping which he deserves; but a bold perpendicular Playwright, avowing himself as such; nay mounted on the top of his joinery, and therefrom exercising a sharp critical superintendence over the German Drama generally. Klingemann, we understand, has lately executed a theatrical Tour, as Don Quixote did various Sallies; and thrown stones into most German Playhouses, and at various German Playwriters; of which we have seen only his assault on Tieck; a feat comparable perhaps to that 'never-imagined adventure of the Windmills.' Fortune, it is said, favours the brave; and the prayer of Burns's Kilmarnock weaver is not always unheard of Heaven. In conclusion, we congratulate Dr. Klingemann on his Manager-dignity in the Brunswick Theatre; a post he seems made for, almost as Bardolph was for the Eastcheap waitership.

But now, like his own Ahasuer, Dr. Klingemann must 'go on—on—on:' for another and greater Doctor has been kept too long waiting, whose Seven beautiful Volumes of *Dramatische Werke* might well secure him a better fate. Dr. Müllner, of all these Playwrights, is the best known in England; some of his works have even, we believe, been translated into our language. In his own country, his fame, or at least notoriety, is also supreme over all: no Playwright of this age makes such a noise as Müllner; nay, many there are who affirm that he is something far better than a Playwright. Critics of the sixth and lower magnitudes, in every corner of Germany, have put the question a thousand times: Whether Müllner is not a Poet and Dramatist? To which question, as the higher authorities maintain an obstinate silence, or, if much pressed, reply only in groans, these sixth-magnitude men have been obliged to make answer themselves; and they have done it with an emphasis and vociferation calculated to dispel all remaining doubts in the minds of men. In Müllner's mind, at least, they have left

little; a conviction the more excusable, as the playgoing vulgar seem to be almost unanimous in sharing it; and thunders of applause, nightly through so many theatres, return him loud acclaim.

Such renown is pleasant food for the hungry appetite of a man, and naturally he rolls it as a sweet morsel under his tongue: but, after all, it can profit him but little; nay, many times, what is sugar to the taste may be sugar-of-lead when it is swallowed. Better were it for Müllner, we think, had fainter thunders of applause and from fewer theatres greeted him. For what good is in it, even were there no evil? Though a thousand caps leap into the air at his name, his own stature is no hairs-breadth higher; neither even can the final estimate of its height be thereby in the smallest degree enlarged. From gainsayers these greetings provoke only a stricter scrutiny; the matter comes to be accurately known at last; and he who has been treated with foolish liberality at one period must make up for it by the want of bare necessaries at another. No one will deny that Müllner is a person of some considerable talent: we understand he is, or was once, a Lawyer; and can believe that he may have acted, and talked, and written, very prettily in that capacity: but to set up for a Poet was quite a different enterprise, in which we reckon that he has altogether mistaken his road, and that these mob-cheers have led him farther and farther astray.

Several years ago, on the faith of very earnest recommendation, it was our lot to read one of Dr. Müllner's Tragedies, the *Albanäserinn;* with which, such was its effect on us, we could willingly enough have terminated our acquaintance with Dr. Müllner. A palpable imitation of Schiller's *Braut von Messina;* without any philosophy or feeling that was not either perfectly commonplace or perfectly false, often both the one and the other; inflated, indeed, into a certain hollow bulk, but altogether without greatness; being built throughout on mere rant and clangor, and other elements of the most indubitable Prose: such a work could not but be satisfactory to us respecting Dr. Müllner's genius as a Poet; and time being precious, and the world wide enough, we had privately determined that we and Dr. Müllner were each henceforth to pursue his own course. Nevertheless, so considerable has been the progress of our worthy friend since then, both at home and abroad, that his

labours are again forced on our notice: for we reckon the existence of a true Poet in any country to be so important a fact, that even the slight probability of such is worthy of investigation. Accordingly we have again perused the *Albanäserinn*, and along with it faithfully examined the whole Dramatic Works of Müllner, published in Seven Volumes, on beautiful paper, in small shape and everyway very fit for handling. The whole tragic works, we should rather say: for three or four of his comic performances sufficiently contented us; and some two volumes of farces, we confess, are still unread. We have also carefully gone through, and with much less difficulty, the Prefaces, Appendices, and other prose sheets, wherein the Author exhibits the '*fata libelli*;' defends himself from unjust criticisms, reports just ones, or himself makes such. The toils of this task we shall not magnify, well knowing that man's life is a fight throughout: only having now gathered what light is to be had on this matter, we proceed to speak forth our verdict thereon; fondly hoping that we shall then have done with it, for an indefinite period of time.

Dr. Müllner, then, we must take liberty to believe, in spite of all that has been said or sung upon the subject, is no Dramatist; has never written a Tragedy, and in all human probability will never write one. Grounds for this harsh, negative opinion, did the burden of proof lie chiefly on our side, we might state in extreme abundance. There is one ground, however, which, if our observation be correct, would virtually include all the rest. Dr. Müllner's whole soul and character, to the deepest root we can trace of it, seems prosaic, not poetical; his Dramas, therefore, like whatever else he produces, must be manufactured, not created; nay, we think that his principle of manufacture is itself rather a poor and secondhand one. Vain were it for any reader to search in these Seven Volumes for an opinion any deeper or clearer, a sentiment any finer or higher, than may conveniently belong to the commonest practising advocate: except stilting heroics, which the man himself half knows to be false, and every other man easily waves aside, there is nothing here to disturb the quiescence either of heart or head. This man is a *Doctor utriusque Juris*, most probably of good juristic talent; and nothing more whatever. His language too, all accurately measured into feet, and good current German, so far as a foreigner may judge, bears similar testimony. Except

the rhyme and metre, it exhibits no poetical symptom: without being verbose, it is essentially meagre and watery; no idiomatic expressiveness, no melody, no virtue of any kind; the commonest vehicle for the commonest meaning. Not that our Doctor is destitute of metaphors and other rhetorical furtherances; but that these also are of the most trivial character: old threadbare material, scoured up into a state of shabby-gentility; mostly turning on 'light' and 'darkness;' 'flashes through clouds,' 'fire of heart,' 'tempest of soul,' and the like, which can profit no man or woman. In short, we must repeat it, Dr. Müllner has yet to show that there is any particle of poetic metal in him; that his genius is other than a sober clay-pit, from which good bricks may be made; but where to look for gold or diamonds were sheer waste of labour.

When we think of our own Maturin and Sheridan Knowles, and the gala-day of popularity which they also once enjoyed with us, we can be at no loss for the genus under which Dr. Müllner is to be included in critical physiology. Nevertheless, in marking him as a distinct Playwright, we are bound to mention that in general intellectual talent he shows himself very considerably superior to his two German brethren. He has a much better taste than Klingemann; rejecting the aid of plush and gunpowder, we may say altogether; is even at the pains to rhyme great part of his Tragedies; and, on the whole, writes with a certain care and decorous composure, to which the Brunswick Manager seems totally indifferent. Moreover, he appears to surpass Grillparzer, as well as Klingemann, in a certain force both of judgment and passion; which indeed is no very mighty affair; Grillparzer being naturally but a treble pipe in these matters; and Klingemann, blowing through such an enormous coach-horn, that the natural note goes for nothing, becomes a mere vibration in that all-subduing volume of sound. At the same time, it is singular enough that neither Grillparzer nor Klingemann should be nearly so tough reading as Müllner; which, however, we declare to be the fact. As to Klingemann, he is even an amusing artist; there is such a briskness and heart in him; so rich is he, nay so exuberant in riches, so full of explosions, fire-flashes, execrations and all manner of catastrophes; and then, good soul, he asks *no* attention from us, knows his trade better than to dream of asking any. Grillparzer, again, is a sadder and perhaps a wiser companion; long-

winded a little, but peaceable and soft-hearted: his melancholy, even when he pules, is in the highest degree inoffensive, and we can often weep a tear or two *for* him, if not with him. But of all Tragedians, may the indulgent Heavens deliver us from any farther traffic with Dr. Müllner! This is the lukewarm, which we could wish to be either cold or hot. Müllner will not keep us awake, while we read him; yet neither will he, like Klingemann, let us fairly get asleep. Ever and anon, it is as if we came into some smooth quiescent country; and the soul flatters herself that here at last she may be allowed to fall back on her cushions, the eyes meanwhile, like two safe postillions, comfortably conducting her through that flat region, in which are nothing but flax-crops and mile-stones; and ever and anon some jolt or unexpected noise fatally disturbs her; and looking out, it is no waterfall or mountain chasm, but only the villanous highway, and squalls of October wind. To speak without figure, Dr. Müllner does seem to us a singularly oppressive writer; and perhaps for this reason: that he hovers *too* near the verge of good writing; ever tempting us with some hope that here is a touch of Poetry; and ever disappointing us with a touch of pure Prose. A stately sentiment comes tramping forth with a clank that sounds poetic and heroic: we start in breathless expectation, waiting to reverence the heavenly guest; and, alas, he proves to be but an old stager dressed in new buckram, a stager well known to us, nay often a stager that has already been drummed out of most well-regulated communities. So is it ever with Dr. Müllner: no feeling can be traced much deeper in him than the tongue; or perhaps when we search more strictly, instead of an ideal of beauty, we shall find some vague aim after strength, or in defect of this, after mere size. And yet how cunningly he manages the counterfeit! A most plausible, fair-spoken, close-shaven man: a man whom you must not, for decency's-sake, throw out of the window; and yet you feel that, being palpably a Turk in grain, his intents are wicked and not charitable!

But the grand question with regard to Müllner, as with regard to those other Playwrights, is: Where lies his peculiar sleight-of-hand in this craft? Let us endeavour, then, to find out his secret,—his recipe for play-making; and communicate the same for behoof of the British nation. Müllner's recipe is no mysterious one; floats, indeed, on the very surface; might

even be taught, one would suppose, on a few trials, to the humblest capacity. Our readers may perhaps recollect Zacharias Werner, and some short allusion, in our First Number, to a highly terrific piece of his, entitled *The Twenty-fourth of February*. A more detailed account of the matter may be found in Madame de Staël's *Allemagne;* in the Chapter which treats of that infatuated Zacharias generally. It is a story of a Swiss peasant and bankrupt, called Kurt Kuruh, if we mistake not; and of his wife, and a rich travelling stranger lodged with them; which latter is, in the night of the Twenty-fourth of February, wilfully and feloniously murdered by the two former; and proves himself, in the act of dying, to be their own only son, who had returned home to make them all comfortable, could they only have had a little more patience. But the foul deed is already accomplished, with a rusty knife or scythe; and nothing of course remains but for the whole batch to go to perdition. For it was written, as the Arabs say, 'on the iron leaf:' these Kuruhs are doomed men; old Kuruh, the grandfather, had committed some sin or other; for which, like the sons of Atreus, his descendants are 'prosecuted with the utmost rigour:' nay so punctilious is Destiny, that this very Twenty-fourth of February, the day when that old sin was enacted, is still a fatal day with the family; and this very knife or scythe, the criminal tool on that former occasion, is ever the instrument of new crime and punishment; the Kuruhs, during all that half century, never having carried it to the smithy to make hobnails; but kept it hanging on a peg, most injudiciously we think, almost as a sort of bait and bonus to Satan, a ready-made fulcrum for whatever machinery he might bring to bear against them. This is the tragic lesson taught in Werner's *Twenty-fourth of February;* and, as the whole *dramatis personæ* are either stuck through with old iron, or hanged in hemp, it is surely taught with some considerable emphasis.

Werner's Play was brought out at Weimar, in 1809; under the direction or permission, as he brags, of the great Goethe himself; and seems to have produced no faint impression on a discerning public. It is, in fact, a piece nowise destitute of substance and a certain coarse vigour; and if any one has so obstinate a heart that he must absolutely stand in a slaughter-house, or within wind of the gallows before tears will come, it may have a very comfortable effect on him. One symptom of

merit it must be admitted to exhibit,—an adaptation to the general taste; for the small fibre of originality which exists here has already shot forth into a whole wood of imitations. We understand that the Fate-line is now quite an established branch of dramatic business in Germany; they have their Fate-dramatists, just as we have our gingham-weavers and inkle-weavers. Of this Fate-manufacture we have already seen one sample in Grillparzer's *Ahnfrau:* but by far the most extensive Fate-manufacturer, the head and prince of all Fate-dramatists, is the Dr. Müllner at present under consideration. Müllner deals in Fate, and Fate only; it is the basis and staple of his whole tragedy-goods; cut off this one principle, you annihilate his raw material, and he can manufacture no more.

Müllner acknowledges his obligations to Werner; but we think, not half warmly enough. Werner was in fact the making of him; great as he has now become our Doctor is nothing but a mere mistletoe growing from that poor oak, itself already half-dead; had there been no *Twenty-fourth of February*, there were then no *Twenty-ninth of February*, no *Schuld*, no *Albanäserinn*, most probably no *König Yngurd*. For the reader is to understand that Dr. Müllner, already a middle-aged, and as yet a perfectly undramatic man, began business with a direct copy of this *Twenty-fourth;* a thing proceeding by Destiny, and ending in murder, by a knife or scythe, as in the Kuruh case; with one improvement, indeed, that there was a grindingstone introduced into the scene, and the spectator had the satisfaction of seeing the knife previously whetted. The Author, too, was honest enough publicly to admit his imitation; for he named this Play the *Twenty-ninth of February;* and, in his Preface, gave thanks, though somewhat reluctantly, to Werner, as to his master and originator. For some inscrutable reason, this *Twenty-ninth* was not sent to the greengrocer, but became popular: there was even the weakest of parodies written on it, entitled *Eumenides Düster* (Eumenides Gloomy), which Müllner has reprinted; there was likewise 'a wish expressed' that the termination might be made joyous, not grievous; with which wish also the indefatigable wright has complied; and so, for the benefit of weak nerves, we have the *Wahn* (Delusion), which still ends in tears, but glad ones. In short, our Doctor has a peculiar merit with this *Twenty-ninth* of his; for who but he could have cut a second and a third face on the same

cherrystone, said cherrystone having first to be borrowed, or indeed half-stolen?

At this point, however, Dr. Müllner apparently began to set up for himself; and ever henceforth he endeavours to persuade his own mind and ours that his debt to Werner terminates here. Nevertheless clear it is that fresh debt was every day contracting. For had not this one Wernerian idea taken complete hold of the Doctor's mind; so that he was quite possessed with it, had, we might say, no other tragic idea whatever? That a man on a certain day of the month shall fall into crime; for which an invisible Fate shall silently pursue him; punishing the transgression, most probably on the same day of the month, annually (unless, as in the *Twenty-ninth*, it be leap-year, and Fate in this may be, to a certain extent, bilked); and never resting till the poor wight himself, and perhaps his last descendant, shall be swept away with the besom of destruction: such, more or less disguised, frequently without any disguise, is the tragic essence, the vital principle, natural or galvanic we are not deciding, of all Dr. Müllner's Dramas. Thus, in that everlasting *Twenty-ninth of February*, we have the principle in its naked state: some old Woodcutter or Forester has fallen into deadly sin with his wife's sister, long ago, on that intercalary day; and so his whole progeny must, wittingly or unwittingly, proceed in incest and murder; the day of the catastrophe regularly occurring, every four years, on the same Twenty-ninth; till happily the whole are murdered, and there is an end. So likewise in the *Schuld* (Guilt), a much more ambitious performance, we have exactly the same doctrine of an anniversary; and the interest once more turns on that delicate business of murder and incest. In the *Albanäserinn* (Fair Albanese), again, which may have the credit, such as it is, of being Müllner's best Play, we find the Fate-theory a little coloured; as if the drug had begun to disgust, and the Doctor would hide it in a spoonful of syrup: it is a dying man's curse that operates on the criminal; which curse, being strengthened by a sin of very old standing in the family of the cursee, takes singular effect; the parties only weathering parricide, fratricide, and the old story of incest, by two self-banishments, and two very decisive self-murders. Nay, it seems as if our Doctor positively could not act at all without this Fate-panacea: in *König Yngurd*, we might almost think that he had made such an attempt,

and found that it would not do. This König Yngurd, an imaginary Peasant-King of Norway, is meant, as we are kindly informed, to present us with some adumbration of Napoleon Bonaparte; and truly, for the two or three first Acts, he goes along with no small gallantry, in what drill-sergeants call a dashing or swashing style; a very virtuous kind of man, and as bold as Ruy Diaz or the Warwick Mastiff: when suddenly in the middle of a battle, far on in the Play, he is seized with some caprice, or whimsical qualm; retires to a solitary place among rocks, and there in a most gratuitous manner, delivers himself over, *viva voce*, to the Devil; who, indeed, does not appear personally to take seisin of him, but yet, as afterwards comes to light, has with great readiness accepted the gift. For now Yngurd grows dreadfully sulky and wicked, does little henceforth but bully men and kill them; till at length, the measure of his iniquities being full, he himself is bullied and killed; and the Author, carried through by this his sovereign tragic elixir, contrary to expectation, terminates his piece with reasonable comfort.

This, then, is Dr. Müllner's dramatic mystery; this is the one patent hook by which he would hang his clay tragedies on the upper spiritual world; and so establish for himself a free communication, almost as if by block-and-tackle, between the visible Prose Earth and the invisible Poetic Heaven. The greater or less merit of this his invention, or rather improvement, for Werner is the real patentee, has given rise, we understand, to extensive argument. The small deer of criticism seem to be much divided in opinion on this point; and the higher orders, as we have stated, declining to throw any light whatever on it, the subject is still mooting with great animation. For our own share, we confess that we incline to rank it, as a recipe for dramatic tears, a shade higher than the Page's split onion in the *Taming of the Shrew*. Craftily hid in the handkerchief, this onion was sufficient for the deception of Christopher Sly; in that way attaining its object; which also the Fate-invention seems to have done with the Christopher Slys of Germany, and these not one but many, and therefore somewhat harder to deceive. To this onion-superiority we think Dr. M. is fairly entitled; and with this it were, perhaps, good for him that he remained content.

Dr. Müllner's Fate-scheme has been attacked by certain of

his traducers on the score of its hostility to the Christian religion. Languishing indeed should we reckon the condition of the Christian religion to be, could Dr. Müllner's play-joinery produce any perceptible effect on it. Nevertheless, we may remark, since the matter is in hand, that this business of Fate does seem to us nowise a Christian doctrine; not even a Mahometan or Heathen one. The *Fate* of the Greeks, though a false, was a lofty hypothesis, and harmonised sufficiently with the whole sensual and material structure of their theology: a ground of deepest black, on which that gorgeous phantasmagoria was fitly enough painted. Besides, with them the avenging Power dwelt, at least in its visible manifestations, among the high places of the earth; visiting only kingly houses and world criminals, from whom it might be supposed the world, but for such miraculous interferences, could have exacted no vengeance, or found no protection and purification. Never, that we recollect of, did the Erinnyes become mere sheriff's-officers, and Fate a justice of the peace, haling poor drudges to the treadmill for robbery of henroosts, or scattering the earth with steel-traps to keep down poaching. And *what* has all this to do with the revealed Providence of these days; that Power whose path is emphatically through the great deep; his doings and plans manifested in completeness, not by the year or by the century, on individuals or on nations, but stretching through Eternity, and over the Infinitude which he rules and sustains?

But there needs no recourse to theological arguments for judging this Fate-tenet of Dr. Müllner's. Its value, as a dramatic principle, may be estimated, it seems to us, by this one consideration: that in these days no person of either sex in the slightest degree believes it; that Dr. Müllner himself does not believe it. We are not contending that fiction should become fact, or that no dramatic incident is genuine, unless it could be sworn to before a jury; but simply that fiction should not be falsehood and delirium. How shall any one, in the drama, or in poetry of any sort, present a consistent philosophy of life, which is the soul and ultimate essence of all poetry, if he and every mortal know that the whole moral basis of his ideal world is a lie? And is it other than a lie that man's life is, was or could be, grounded on this pettifogging principle of a Fate that pursues woodcutters and cowherds with miraculous visitations, on stated days of the month? Can we, with any profit, hold

the mirror up to Nature in this wise? When our mirror is no mirror, but only as it were a nursery saucepan, and that long since grown rusty?

We might add, were it of any moment in this case, that we reckon Dr. Müllner's tragic knack altogether insufficient for a still more comprehensive reason; simply for the reason that it *is* a knack, a recipe, or secret of the craft, which, could it be never so excellent, must by repeated use degenerate into a mannerism, and therefore into a nuisance. But herein lies the difference between creation and manufacture: the latter has its manipulations, its secret processes, which can be learned by apprenticeship; the former has not. For in poetry we have heard of no secret possessing the smallest effectual virtue, except this one general secret: that the poet be a man of a purer, higher, richer nature than other men; which higher nature shall itself, after earnest inquiry, have taught him the proper form for embodying its inspirations, as indeed the imperishable beauty of these will shine, with more or less distinctness, through any form whatever.

Had Dr. Müllner any visible pretension to this last great secret, it might be a duty to dwell longer and more gravely on his minor ones, however false and poor. As he has no such pretension, it appears to us that for the present we may take our leave. To give any farther analysis of his individual dramas would be an easy task, but a stupid and thankless one. A Harrison's watch, though this too is but an earthly machine, may be taken asunder with some prospect of scientific advantage; but who would spend time in screwing and unscrewing the mechanism of ten pepper-mills? Neither shall we offer any extract, as a specimen of the diction and sentiment that reigns in these dramas. We have said already that it is fair, well-ordered stage-sentiment, this of his; that the diction too is good, well-scanned, grammatical diction; no fault to be found with either, except that they pretend to be poetry, and are throughout the most unadulterated prose. To exhibit this fact in extracts would be a vain undertaking. Not the few sprigs of heath, but the thousand acres of it, characterise the wilderness. Let any one who covets a trim heath-nosegay, clutch at random into Müllner's Seven Volumes: for ourselves, we would not deal farther in that article.

Besides his dramatic labours, Dr. Müllner is known to the

public as a journalist. For some considerable time he has edited a Literary Newspaper of his own originating, the *Mitternacht-Blatt* (Midnight Paper); stray leaves of which we occasionally look into. In this last capacity, we are happy to observe, he shows to much more advantage: indeed, the journalistic office seems quite natural to him; and would he take any advice from us, which he will not, here were the arena in which, and not in the Fate-drama, he would exclusively continue to fence, for his bread or glory. He is not without a vein of small wit; a certain degree of drollery there is, of grinning half-risible, half-impudent; he has a fair hand at the feebler sort of lampoon; the German Joe Millers also seem familiar to him, and his skill in the riddle is respectable: so that altogether, as we said, he makes a superior figure in this line, which indeed is but despicably managed in Germany; and his *Mitternacht-Blatt* is, by several degrees, the most readable paper of its kind we meet with in that country. Not that we, in the abstract, much admire Dr. Müllner's newspaper procedure; his style is merely the common tavern style, familiar enough in our own periodical literature; riotous, blustering, with some tincture of blackguardism; a half-dishonest style, and smells considerably of tobacco and spirituous liquor. Neither do we find that there is the smallest fraction of valuable knowledge or opinion communicated in the Midnight Paper; indeed, except it be the knowledge and opinion that Dr. Müllner *is* a great dramatist, and that all who presume to think otherwise are insufficient members of society, we cannot charge our memory with having gathered any knowledge from it whatever. It may be too, that Dr. Müllner is not perfectly original in his journalistic manner: we have sometimes felt as if his light were, to a certain extent, a borrowed one; a rushlight kindled at the great pitch-link of our own *Blackwood's Magazine*. But on this point we cannot take upon us to decide.

One of Müllner's regular journalistic articles is the *Kriegszeitung*, or War-intelligence, of all the paper-battles, feuds, defiances and private assassinations, chiefly dramatic, which occur in the more distracted portion of the German Literary Republic. This *Kriegszeitung* Dr. Müllner evidently writes with great gusto, in a lively braggadocio manner, especially when touching on his own exploits; yet to us it is far the most melancholy part of the *Mitternacht-Blatt*. Alas, this is not what we search for

in a German newspaper; how 'Herr Sapphir,' or Herr Carbuncle, or so many other Herren Dousterswivel, are all busily molesting one another! We ourselves are pacific men; make a point 'to shun discrepant circles rather than seek them:' and how sad is it to hear of so many illustrious-obscure persons living in foreign parts, and hear only, what was well known without hearing, that they also are instinct with the spirit of Satan! For what is the bone that these Journalists, in Berlin and elsewhere, are worrying over; what is the ultimate purpose of all this barking and snarling? Sheer love of fight, you would say; simply to make one another's life a *little* bitterer; as if Fate had not been cross enough to the happiest of them. Were there any perceptible subject of dispute, *any* doctrine to advocate, even a false one, it would be something; but, so far as we can discover, whether from Sapphire and Company, or the 'Nabob of Weissenfels' (our own worthy Doctor), there is none. And is this their appointed function? Are Editors scattered over the country, and supplied with victuals and fuel, purely to bite one another? Certainly not. But these Journalists, we think, are like the Academician's colony of spiders. This French virtuoso had found that cobwebs were worth something, that they could even be woven into silk stockings: whereupon he exhibits a very handsome pair of cobweb hose to the Academy, is encouraged to proceed with the manufacture; and so collects some half-bushel of spiders, and puts them down in a spacious loft, with every convenience for making silk. But will the vicious creatures spin a thread? In place of it, they take to fighting with their whole vigour, in contempt of the poor Academician's utmost exertions to part them; and end not, till there is simply one spider left living, and not a shred of cobweb woven, or thenceforth to be expected! Could the weavers of paragraphs, like these of the cobweb, fairly exterminate and silence one another, it would perhaps be a little more supportable. But an Editor is made of sterner stuff. In general cases, indeed, when the brains are out the man will die: but it is a well-known fact in Journalistics, that a man may not only live, but support wife and children by his labours in this line, years after the brain (if there ever was any) has been completely abstracted, or reduced by time and hard usage into a state of dry powder. What, then, is to be done? Is there no end to this brawling; and will the unprofitable noise endure forever? By way of palliative, we

have sometimes imagined that a Congress of all German Editors might be appointed, by proclamation, in some central spot, say the Nürnberg Market-place, if it would hold them all: here we would humbly suggest that the whole *Journalistik* might assemble on a given day, and under the eye of proper marshals, sufficiently and satisfactorily horsewhip one another, simultaneously, each his neighbour, till the very toughest had enough both of whipping and of being whipped. In this way, it seems probable, little or no injustice would be done; and each Journalist, cleared of gall for several months, might return home in a more composed frame of mind, and betake himself with new alacrity to the real duties of his office.

But enough! enough! The humour of these men may be infectious: it is not good for us to be here. Wandering over the Elysian Fields of German Literature, not watching the gloomy discords of its Tartarus, is what we wish to be employed in. Let the iron gate again close, and shut-in the pallid kingdoms from view: we gladly revisit the upper air. Not in despite towards the German nation, which we love honestly, have we spoken thus of these its Playwrights and Journalists. Alas, when we look around us at home, we feel too well that the Germans might say to us: Neighbour, sweep thy own floor! Neither is it with any hope of bettering the existence of these three individual Poetasters, still less with the smallest shadow of wish to make it more miserable, that we have spoken. After all, there must be Playwrights, as we have said; and these are among the best of the class. So long as it pleases them to manufacture in this line, and any body of German Thebans to pay them in *groschen* or plaudits for their ware, let both parties persist in so doing, and fair befall them! But the duty of Foreign Reviewers is of a twofold sort. For not only are we stationed on the coast of the country, as watchers and spials, to report whatsoever remarkable thing becomes visible in the distance; but we stand there also as a sort of Tide-waiters and Preventive-service men, to contend, with our utmost vigour, that no improper article be landed. These offices, it would seem, as in the material world, so also in the literary and spiritual, usually fall to the lot of aged, invalided, impoverished, or otherwise decayed persons; but that is little to the matter. As true British subjects, with ready will, though it may be with our last strength, we are here to discharge that double duty. Move-

ments, we observe, are making along the beach, and signals out seawards, as if these Klingemanns and Müllners were to be landed on our soil: but through the strength of heaven this shall not be done, till the 'most thinking people' know what it *is* that is landing. For the rest, if any one wishes to import that sort of produce, and finds it nourishing for his inward man, let him do so, and welcome. Only let him understand that it is not German Literature he is swallowing, but the froth and scum of German Literature; which scum, if he will only wait, we can farther promise him that he may, ere long, enjoy in the new, and perhaps cheaper form of *sediment*. And so let every one be active for himself:

Noch ist es Tag, da rühre sich der Mann;
Die Nacht tritt ein, wo niemand wirken kann.

VOLTAIRE.[1]

[1829.]

Could ambition always choose its own path, and were will in human undertakings synonymous with faculty, all truly ambitious men would be men of letters. Certainly, if we examine that love of power, which enters so largely into most practical calculations, nay which our Utilitarian friends have recognised as the sole end and origin, both motive and reward, of all earthly enterprises, animating alike the philanthropist, the conqueror, the money-changer and the missionary, we shall find that all other arenas of ambition, compared with this rich and boundless one of Literature, meaning thereby whatever respects the promulgation of Thought, are poor, limited and ineffectual. For dull, unreflective, merely instinctive as the ordinary man may seem, he has nevertheless, as a quite indispensable appendage, a head that in some degree considers and computes; a lamp or rushlight of understanding has been given him, which, through whatever dim, besmoked and strangely diffractive media it may shine, is the ultimate guiding light of his whole path: and here as well as there, now as at all times in man's history, Opinion rules the world.

Curious it is, moreover, to consider in this respect, how different appearance is from reality, and under what singular shape and circumstances the truly most important man of any given period might be found. Could some Asmodeus, by simply waving his arm, open asunder the meaning of the Present, even so far as the Future will disclose it, what a much more marvellous sight should we have, than that mere bodily one through

[1] Foreign Review, No. 6.—*Mémoires sur Voltaire et sur ses Ouvrages, par Longchamp et Wagnière, ses Secrétaires; suivis de divers Ecrits inédits de la Marquise du Châtelet, du Président Hénault, &c. tous relatifs à Voltaire.* (Memoirs concerning Voltaire and his Works, by Longchamp and Wagnière, his Secretaries; with various unpublished Pieces by the Marquise du Châtelet, &c. all relating to Voltaire.) 2 tomes. Paris, 1826.

the roofs of Madrid! For we know not what we are, any more than what we shall be. It is a high, solemn, almost awful thought for every individual man, that his earthly influence, which has had a commencement, will never through all ages, were he the very meanest of us, have an end! What is done is done; has already blended itself with the boundless, ever-living, ever-working Universe, and will also work there, for good or for evil, openly or secretly, throughout all time. But the life of every man is as the wellspring of a stream, whose small beginnings are indeed plain to all, but whose ulterior course and destination, as it winds through the expanses of infinite years, only the Omniscient can discern. Will it mingle with neighbouring rivulets, as a tributary; or receive them as their sovereign? Is it to be a nameless brook, and will its tiny waters, among millions of other brooks and rills, increase the current of some world-river? Or is it to be itself a Rhone or Danaw, whose goings-forth are to the uttermost lands, its flood an everlasting boundary-line on the globe itself, the bulwark and highway of whole kingdoms and continents? We know not; only in either case, we know, its path is to the great ocean; its waters, were they but a handful, are *here*, and cannot be annihilated or permanently held back.

As little can we prognosticate, with any certainty, the future influences from the present aspects of an individual. How many Demagogues, Crœsuses, Conquerors fill their own age with joy or terror, with a tumult that promises to be perennial; and in the next age die away into insignificance and oblivion! These are the forests of gourds, that overtop the infant cedars and aloe-trees, but, like the Prophet's gourd, wither on the third day. What was it to the Pharaohs of Egypt, in that old era, if Jethro the Midianitish priest and grazier accepted the Hebrew outlaw as his herdsman? Yet the Pharaohs, with all their chariots of war, are buried deep in the wrecks of time; and that Moses still lives, not among his own tribe only, but in the hearts and daily business of all civilised nations. Or figure Mahomet, in his youthful years, 'travelling to the horse-fairs of Syria.' Nay, to take an infinitely higher instance: who has ever forgotten those lines of Tacitus; inserted as a small, transitory, altogether trifling circumstance in the history of such a potentate as Nero? To us it is the most earnest, sad and sternly significant passage that we know to exist in writing: *Ergo*

abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos, et quæsitissimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invisos, vulgus CHRISTIANOS *appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus* CHRISTUS, *qui, Tiberio imperitante, per Procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat. Repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per Judæam originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque.* 'So, for 'the quieting of this rumour,[2] Nero judicially charged with 'the crime, and punished with most studied severities, that 'class, hated for their general wickedness, whom the vulgar 'called *Christians*. The originator of that name was one *Christ*, 'who, in the reign of Tiberius, suffered death by sentence of 'the Procurator, Pontius Pilate. The baneful superstition, 'thereby repressed for the time, again broke out, not only over 'Judea, the native soil of that mischief, but in the City also, 'where from every side all atrocious and abominable things 'collect and flourish.'[3] Tacitus was the wisest, most penetrating man of his generation; and to such depth, and no deeper, has he seen into this transaction, the most important that has occurred or can occur in the annals of mankind.

Nor is it only to those primitive ages, when religions took their rise, and a man of pure and high mind appeared not merely as a teacher and philosopher, but as a priest and prophet, that our observation applies. The same uncertainty, in estimating present things and men, holds more or less in all times; for in all times, even in those which seem most trivial, and open to research, human society rests on inscrutably deep foundations; which he is of all others the most mistaken, who fancies he has explored to the bottom. Neither is that sequence, which we love to speak of as 'a chain of causes,' properly to be figured as a 'chain' or line, but rather as a tissue, or superficies of innumerable lines, extending in breadth as well as in length, and with a complexity, which will foil and utterly bewilder the most assiduous computation. In fact, the wisest of us must, for by far the most part, judge like the simplest; estimate importance by mere magnitude, and expect that what strongly affects our own generation will strongly affect those that are to follow. In this way it is that Conquerors and political Revolutionists come to figure as so mighty in their influences; whereas truly there is no class of persons creating such

[2] Of his having set fire to Rome.

[3] Tacit. *Annal.* xv. 44.

an uproar in the world, who in the long-run produce so very slight an impression on its affairs. When Tamerlane had finished building his pyramid of seventy thousand human skulls, and was seen 'standing at the gate of Damascus, glittering in steel, 'with his battle-axe on his shoulder,' till his fierce hosts filed out to new victories and new carnage, the pale onlooker might have fancied that Nature was in her death-throes; for havoc and despair had taken possession of the earth, the sun of manhood seemed setting in seas of blood. Yet, it might be, on that very gala-day of Tamerlane, a little boy was playing ninepins on the streets of Mentz, whose history was more important to men than that of twenty Tamerlanes. The Tartar Khan, with his shaggy demons of the wilderness, 'passed away like a whirlwind,' to be forgotten forever; and that German artizan has wrought a benefit, which is yet immeasurably expanding itself, and will continue to expand itself through all countries and through all times. What are the conquests and expeditions of the whole corporation of captains, from Walter the Penniless to Napoleon Bonaparte, compared with these 'movable types' of Johannes Faust?

Truly it is a mortifying thing for your Conqueror to reflect, how perishable is the metal which he hammers with such violence: how the kind earth will soon shroud-up his bloody footprints; and all that he achieved and skilfully piled together will be but like his own 'canvas city' of a camp,—this evening loud with life, tomorrow all struck and vanished, 'a few earth-pits and heaps of straw!' For here, as always, it continues true, that the deepest force is the stillest; that, as in the Fable, the mild shining of the sun shall silently accomplish what the fierce blustering of the tempest has in vain essayed. Above all, it is ever to be kept in mind, that not by material, but by moral power, are men and their actions governed. How noiseless is thought! No rolling of drums, no tramp of squadrons, or immeasurable tumult of baggage-wagons, attends its movements: in what obscure and sequestered places may the head be meditating, which is one day to be crowned with more than imperial authority; for Kings and Emperors will be among its ministering servants; it will rule not over, but *in*, all heads, and with these its solitary combinations of ideas, as with magic formulas, bend the world to its will! The time may come, when Napoleon himself will be better known for his laws than for his battles;

and the victory of Waterloo prove less momentous than the opening of the first Mechanics' Institute.

We have been led into such rather trite reflections, by these Volumes of *Memoirs on Voltaire;* a man in whose history the relative importance of intellectual and physical power is again curiously evinced. This also was a private person, by birth nowise an elevated one; yet so far as present knowledge will enable us to judge, it may be said that to abstract Voltaire and his activity from the eighteenth century, were to produce a greater difference in the existing figure of things, than the want of any other individual, up to this day, could have occasioned. Nay, with the single exception of Luther, there is perhaps, in these modern ages, no other man of a merely intellectual character, whose influence and reputation have become so entirely European as that of Voltaire. Indeed, like the great German Reformer's, his doctrines too, almost from the first, have affected not only the belief of the thinking world, silently propagating themselves from mind to mind; but in a high degree also, the conduct of the active and political world; entering as a distinct element into some of the most fearful civil convulsions which European history has on record.

Doubtless, to his own contemporaries, to such of them at least as had any insight into the actual state of men's minds, Voltaire already appeared as a noteworthy and decidedly historical personage: yet, perhaps, not the wildest of his admirers ventured to assign him such a magnitude as he now figures in, even with his adversaries and detractors. He has grown in apparent importance, as we receded from him, as the nature of his endeavours became more and more visible in their results. For, unlike many great men, but like all great agitators, Voltaire everywhere shows himself emphatically as the man of his century: uniting in his own person whatever spiritual accomplishments were most valued by that age; at the same time, with no depth to discern its ulterior tendencies, still less with any magnanimity to attempt withstanding these, his greatness and his littleness alike fitted him to produce an immediate effect; for he leads whither the multitude was of itself dimly minded to run, and keeps the van not less by skill in commanding, than by cunning in obeying. Besides, now that we look on the matter from some distance, the efforts of a thousand coadjutors and disciples, nay

a series of mighty political vicissitudes, in the production of which these efforts had but a subsidiary share, have all come, naturally in such a case, to appear as if exclusively his work; so that he rises before us as the paragon and epitome of a whole spiritual period, now almost passed away, yet remarkable in itself, and more than ever interesting to us, who seem to stand, as it were, on the confines of a new and better one.

Nay, had we forgotten that ours is the 'Age of the Press,' when he who runs may not only read, but furnish us with reading; and simply counted the books, and scattered leaves, thick as the autumnal in Vallombrosa, that have been written and printed concerning this man, we might almost fancy him the most important person, not of the eighteenth century, but of all the centuries from Noah's Flood downwards. We have *Lives* of Voltaire by friend and by foe: Condorcet, Duvernet, Lepan, have each given us a whole; portions, documents and all manner of authentic or spurious contributions have been supplied by innumerable hands; of which we mention only the labours of his various Secretaries: Collini's, published some twenty years ago, and now these Two massive Octavos from Longchamp and Wagnière. To say nothing of the Baron de Grimm's Collections, unparalleled in more than one respect; or of the six-and-thirty volumes of scurrilous eaves-dropping, long since printed under the title of *Mémoires de Bachaumont;* or of the daily and hourly attacks and defences that appeared separately in his lifetime, and all the judicial pieces, whether in the style of apotheosis or of excommunication, that have seen the light since then; a mass of fugitive writings, the very diamond edition of which might fill whole libraries. The peculiar talent of the French in all narrative, at least in all anecdotic departments, rendering most of these works extremely readable, still farther favoured their circulation both at home and abroad: so that now, in most countries, Voltaire has been read of and talked of, till his name and life have grown familiar like those of a village acquaintance. In England, at least-where for almost a century the study of foreign literature has, we may say, confined itself to that of the French, with a slight intermixture from the elder Italians, Voltaire's writings, and such writings as treated of him, were little likely to want readers. We suppose, there is no literary era, not even any domestic one, concerning which Englishmen in general have such infor-

mation, at least have gathered so many anecdotes and opinions, as concerning this of Voltaire. Nor have native additions to the stock been wanting, and these of a due variety in purport and kind: maledictions, expostulations and dreadful death-scenes painted like Spanish *Sanbenitos*, by weak well-meaning persons of the hostile class; eulogies, generally of a gayer sort, by open or secret friends: all this has been long and extensively carried on among us. There is even an English *Life of Voltaire*;[4] nay we remember to have seen portions of his writings cited *in terrorem*, and with criticisms, in some pamphlet, 'by a country gentleman,' either on the Education of the People, or else on the question of Preserving the Game.

With the 'Age of the Press,' and such manifestations of it on this subject, we are far from quarrelling. We have read great part of these thousand-and-first 'Memoirs on Voltaire,' by Longchamp and Wagnière, not without satisfaction; and can cheerfully look forward to still other 'Memoirs' following in their train. Nothing can be more in the course of Nature than the wish to satisfy oneself with knowledge of all sorts about any distinguished person, especially of our own era; the true study of his character, his spiritual individuality and peculiar manner of existence, is full of instruction for all mankind: even that of his looks, sayings, habitudes and indifferent actions, were not the records of them generally lies, is rather to be commended; nay are not such lies themselves, when they keep within bounds, and the subject of them has been dead for some time, equal to snipe-shooting, or Colburn-Novels, at least little inferior, in the great art of getting done with life, or, as it is technically called, killing time? For our own part, we say: Would that every Johnson in the world had his veridical Boswell, or leash of Boswells! We could then tolerate his Hawkins also, though not veridical. With regard to Voltaire, in particular, it seems to us not only innocent but profitable that the whole truth regarding him should be well understood. Surely the biography of

[4] 'By Frank Hall Standish, Esq.' (London, 1821); a work which we can recommend only to such as feel themselves in extreme want of information on this subject, and except in their own language unable to acquire any. It is written very badly, though with sincerity, and not without considerable indications of talent; to all appearance, by a minor; many of whose statements and opinions (for he seems an inquiring, honest-hearted, rather decisive character) must have begun to astonish even himself, several years ago.

such a man, who, to say no more of him, spent his best efforts, and as many still think, successfully, in assaulting the Christian religion, must be a matter of considerable import; what he did, and what he could not do; how he did it, or attempted it, that is, with what degree of strength, clearness, especially with what moral intents, what theories and feelings on man and man's life, are questions that will bear some discussing. To Voltaire individually, for the last fifty-one years, the discussion has been indifferent enough; and to us it is a discussion not on one remarkable person only, and chiefly for the curious or studious, but involving considerations of highest moment to all men, and inquiries which the utmost compass of our philosophy will be unable to embrace.

Here, accordingly, we are about to offer some farther observations on this *quæstio vexata;* not without hope that the reader may accept them in good part. Doubtless, when we look at the whole bearings of the matter, there seems little prospect of any unanimity respecting it, either now, or within a calculable period: it is probable that many will continue for a long time to speak of this 'universal genius,' this 'apostle of Reason,' and 'father of sound Philosophy;' and many again, of this 'monster of impiety,' this 'sophist,' and 'atheist,' and 'ape-demon;' or, like the late Dr. Clarke of Cambridge, dismiss him more briefly with information that he is a 'driveller:' neither is it essential that these two parties should, on the spur of the instant, reconcile themselves herein. Nevertheless, truth is better than error, were it only 'on Hannibal's vinegar.' It may be expected that men's opinions concerning Voltaire, which is of some moment, and concerning Voltairism, which is of almost boundless moment, will, if they cannot meet, gradually at every new comparison approach towards meeting; and what is still more desirable, towards meeting somewhere nearer the truth than they actually stand.

With honest wishes to promote such approximation, there is one condition, which above all others in this inquiry we must beg the reader to impose on himself: the duty of fairness towards Voltaire, of tolerance towards him, as towards all men. This, truly, is a duty which we have the happiness to hear daily inculcated; yet which, it has been well said, no mortal is at bottom disposed to practise. Nevertheless, if we really desire to understand the truth on any subject, not merely, as is

much more common, to confirm our already existing opinions, and gratify this and the other pitiful claim of vanity or malice in respect of it, tolerance may be regarded as the most indispensable of all prerequisites; the condition, indeed, by which alone any real progress in the question becomes possible. In respect of our fellow-men, and all real insight into their characters, this is especially true. No character, we may affirm, was ever rightly understood till it had first been regarded with a certain feeling, not of tolerance only, but of sympathy. For here, more than in any other case, it is verified that the heart sees farther than the head. Let us be sure, our enemy is *not* that hateful being we are too apt to paint him. His vices and basenesses lie combined in far other order before his own mind than before ours; and under colours which palliate them, nay perhaps exhibit them as virtues. Were he the wretch of our imagining, his life would be a burden to himself: for it is not by bread alone that the basest mortal lives; a certain approval of conscience is equally essential even to physical existence; is the fine all-pervading cement by which that wondrous union, a Self, is held together. Since the man, therefore, is not in Bedlam, and has not shot or hanged himself, let us take comfort, and conclude that he is one of two things: either a vicious *dog* in man's guise, to be muzzled and mourned over, and greatly marvelled at; or a real *man*, and consequently not without moral worth, which is to be enlightened, and so far approved of. But to judge rightly of his character, we must learn to look at it, not less with his eyes, than with our own; we must learn to pity him, to see him as a fellow-creature, in a word, to love him; or his real spiritual nature will ever be mistaken by us. In interpreting Voltaire, accordingly, it will be needful to bear some things carefully in mind, and to keep many other things as carefully in abeyance. Let us forget that *our* opinions were ever assailed by him, or ever defended; that *we* have to thank him, or upbraid him, for pain or for pleasure; let us forget that we are Deists or Millennarians, Bishops or Radical Reformers, and remember only that we are men. This is a European subject, or there never was one; and must, if we would in the least comprehend it, be looked at neither from the parish belfry, nor any Peterloo platform; but, if possible, from some natural and infinitely higher point of vision.

It is a remarkable fact, that throughout the last fifty years of his life Voltaire was seldom or never named, even by his detractors, without the epithet 'great' being appended to him; so that, had the syllables suited such a junction, as they did in the happier case of *Charle-Magne*, we might almost have expected that, not *Voltaire*, but *Voltaire-ce-grand-homme* would be his designation with posterity. However, posterity is much more stinted in its allowances on that score; and a multitude of things remain to be adjusted, and questions of very dubious issue to be gone into, before such coronation-titles can be conceded with any permanence. The million, even the wiser part of them, are apt to lose their discretion, when 'tumultuously assembled;' for a small object, near at hand, may subtend a large angle; and often a Pennenden Heath has been mistaken for a Field of Runnymede; whereby the couplet on that immortal Dalhousie proves to be the emblem of many a man's real fortune with the public:

> And thou, Dalhousie, the great God of War,
> Lieutenant-Colonel to the Earl of Mar;

the latter end corresponding poorly with the beginning. To ascertain what was the true significance of Voltaire's history, both as respects himself and the world; what was his specific character and value as a man; what has been the character and value of his influence on society, of his appearance as an active agent in the culture of Europe: all this leads us into much deeper investigations; on the settlement of which, however, the whole business turns.

To our own view, we confess, on looking at Voltaire's life, the chief quality that shows itself is one for which *adroitness* seems the fitter name. Greatness implies several conditions, the existence of which in his case it might be difficult to demonstrate; but of his claim to this other praise there can be no disputing. Whatever be his aims, high or low, just or the contrary, he is, at all times and to the utmost degree, expert in pursuing them. It is to be observed, moreover, that his aims in general were not of a simple sort, and the attainment of them easy: few literary men have had a course so diversified with vicissitudes as Voltaire's. His life is not spent in a corner, like that of a studious recluse, but on the open theatre of the world; in an age full of commotion, when society is rend-

ing itself asunder, Superstition already armed for deadly battle against Unbelief; in which battle he himself plays a distinguished part. From his earliest years, we find him in perpetual communication with the higher personages of his time, often with the highest: it is in circles of authority, of reputation, at lowest of fashion and rank, that he lives and works. Ninon de l'Enclos leaves the boy a legacy to buy books; he is still young, when he can say of his supper-companions, "We are all Princes or Poets." In after-life he exhibits himself in company or correspondence with all manner of principalities and powers, from Queen Caroline of England to the Empress Catherine of Russia, from Pope Benedict to Frederick the Great. Meanwhile, shifting from side to side of Europe, hiding in the country or living sumptuously in capital cities, he quits not his pen; with which, as with some enchanter's rod, more potent than any king's sceptre, he turns and winds the mighty machine of European Opinion; approves himself, as his schoolmaster had predicted, the *Coryphée du Déisme;* and, not content with this elevation, strives, and nowise ineffectually, to unite with it a poetical, historical, philosophic and even scientific preëminence. Nay, we may add, a pecuniary one; for he speculates in the funds, diligently solicits pensions and promotions, trades to America, is long a regular victualling-contractor for armies; and thus, by one means and another, independently of literature which would never yield much money, raises his income from 800 francs a-year to more than centuple that sum.[5] And now, having, besides all this commercial and economical business, written some thirty quartos, the most popular that were ever written, he returns after long exile to his native city, to be welcomed there almost as a religious idol; and closes a life, prosperous alike in the building of country-seats, and the composition of *Henriades* and *Philosophical Dictionaries*, by the most appropriate demise,—by drowning, as it were, in an ocean of applause; so that as he lived for fame, he may be said to have died of it.

Such various, complete success, granted only to a small portion of men in any age of the world, presupposes at least, with every allowance for good fortune, an almost unrivalled expertness of management. There must have been a great talent of some kind at work here; a cause proportionate to the effect,

[5] See Tome ii. p. 328 of these *Mémoires*.

It is wonderful, truly, to observe with what perfect skill Voltaire steers his course through so many conflicting circumstances: how he weathers this Cape Horn, darts lightly through that Mahlstrom; always either sinks his enemy, or shuns him; here waters, and careens, and traffics with the rich savages; there lies land-locked till the hurricane is overblown; and so, in spite of all billows, and sea-monsters, and hostile fleets, finishes his long Manilla voyage, with streamers flying, and deck piled with ingots! To say nothing of his literary character, of which this same dexterous address will also be found to be a main feature, let us glance only at the general aspect of his conduct, as manifested both in his writings and actions. By turns, and ever at the right season, he is imperious and obsequious; now shoots abroad, from the mountain-tops, Hyperion-like, his keen innumerable shafts; anon, when danger is advancing, flies to obscure nooks; or, if taken in the fact, swears it was but in sport, and that he is the peaceablest of men. He bends to occasion; can, to a certain extent, blow hot or blow cold; and never attempts force, where cunning will serve his turn. The beagles of the Hierarchy and of the Monarchy, proverbially quick of scent and sharp of tooth, are out in quest of him; but this is a lion-fox which cannot be captured. By wiles and a thousand doublings, he utterly distracts his pursuers; he can burrow in the earth, and all trace of him is gone.[6] With a strange system of anonymity and publicity, of denial and assertion, of Mystification in all senses, has Voltaire surrounded himself. He can raise no standing armies for his defence, yet he too is a 'European Power,' and not undefended; an invisible, impregnable, though hitherto unrecognised bulwark, that of Public Opinion, defends him. With great art he maintains this stronghold; though ever and anon sallying out from it, far beyond the permitted limits. But he has his coat of darkness, and his shoes of swiftness, like that other Killer of Giants. We find Voltaire a supple courtier, or a sharp satirist, he can talk blasphemy, and build churches, according to the signs of the times. Frederick the Great is not too high for his diplo-

[6] Of one such 'taking to cover' we have a curious and rather ridiculous account in this Work, by Longchamp. It was with the Duchess du Maine that he sought shelter, and on a very slight occasion: nevertheless he had to lie perdue, for two months, at the Castle of Sceaux; and, with closed windows, and burning candles in daylight, compose *Zadig*, *Babouc*, *Memnon*, &c. for his amusement.

macy, nor the poor Printer of his *Zadig* too low ;[7] he manages the Cardinal Fleuri, and the Curé of St. Sulpice ; and laughs in his sleeve at all the world. We should pronounce him to be one of the best politicians on record ; as we have said, the *adroitest* of all literary men.

At the same time, Voltaire's worst enemies, it seems to us, will not deny that he had naturally a keen sense for rectitude, indeed for all virtue : the utmost vivacity of temperament characterises him ; his quick susceptibility for every form of beauty is moral as well as intellectual. Nor was his practice without indubitable and highly creditable proofs of this. To the help-needing he was at all times a ready benefactor : many were the hungry adventurers who profited of his bounty, and then bit the hand that had fed them. If we enumerate his generous acts, from the case of the Abbé Desfontaines down to that of the Widow Calas, and the Serfs of Saint Claude, we shall find that few private men have had so wide a circle of charity, and have watched over it so well. Should it be objected that love of reputation entered largely into these proceedings, Voltaire can afford a handsome deduction on that head : should the uncharitable even calculate that love of reputation was the sole motive, we can only remind them that love of *such* reputation is itself the effect of a social, humane disposition ; and wish, as an immense improvement, that all men were animated with it. Voltaire was not without his experience of human baseness ; but he still had a fellow-feeling for human sufferings ; and delighted, were it only as an honest luxury, to relieve them. His attachments seemed remarkably constant and lasting : even such sots as Thiriot, whom nothing but habit could have endeared to him, he continues, and after repeated injuries, to treat and regard as friends. Of his equals we do not observe him envious, at least not palpably and despicably so ; though this, we should add, might be in him, who was from the first so paramountly popular, no such hard attainment. Against Montesquieu, perhaps against him alone, he cannot help entertaining a small secret grudge ; yet ever in public he does him the amplest justice ; *l'Arlequin-Grotius* of the fireside becomes, on all grave occasions, the author of the *Esprit des Lois*. Neither to his enemies, and even betrayers, is Voltaire implacable or

[7] See in Longchamp (pp. 154-163) how, by natural legerdemain, a knave may be caught, and the *change rendu à des imprimeurs infidèles*.

meanly vindictive: the instant of their submission is also the instant of his forgiveness; their hostility itself provokes only casual sallies from him; his heart is too kindly, indeed too light, to cherish any rancour, any continuation of revenge. If he has not the virtue to forgive, he is seldom without the prudence to forget: if, in his life-long contentions, he cannot treat his opponents with any magnanimity, he seldom, or perhaps never once, treats them quite basely; seldom or never with that absolute unfairness, which the law of retaliation might so often have seemed to justify. We would say that, if no heroic, he is at all times a perfectly civilised man; which, considering that his war was with exasperated theologians, and a 'war to the knife' on their part, may be looked upon as rather a surprising circumstance. He exhibits many minor virtues, a due appreciation of the highest; and fewer faults than, in his situation, might have been expected, and perhaps pardoned.

All this is well, and may fit out a highly expert and much-esteemed man of business, in the widest sense of that term; but is still far from constituting a 'great character.' In fact, there is one deficiency in Voltaire's original structure, which, it appears to us, must be quite fatal to such claims for him: we mean his inborn levity of nature, his entire want of Earnestness. Voltaire was by birth a Mocker, and light *Pococurante;* which natural disposition his way of life confirmed into a predominant, indeed all-pervading habit. Far be it from us to say, that solemnity is an essential of greatness; that no great man can have other than a rigid vinegar aspect of countenance, never to be thawed or warmed by billows of mirth! There are things in this world to be laughed at, as well as things to be admired; and his is no complete mind, that cannot give to each sort its due. Nevertheless, contempt is a dangerous element to sport in; a deadly one, if we habitually live in it. How, indeed, to take the lowest view of this matter, shall a man accomplish great enterprises; enduring all toil, resisting temptation, laying aside every weight,—unless he zealously love what he pursues? The faculty of love, of admiration, is to be regarded as the sign and the measure of high souls: unwisely directed, it leads to many evils; but without it there cannot be any good. Ridicule, on the other hand, is indeed a faculty much prized by its possessors; yet, intrinsically, it

is a small faculty; we may say, the smallest of all faculties that other men are at the pains to repay with any esteem. It is directly opposed to Thought, to Knowledge, properly so called; its nourishment and essence is Denial, which hovers only on the surface, while Knowledge dwells far below. Moreover it is by nature selfish and morally trivial; it cherishes nothing but our Vanity, which may in general be left safely enough to shift for itself. Little 'discourse of reason,' in any sense, is implied in Ridicule: a scoffing man is in no lofty mood, for the time; shows more of the imp than of the angel. This too when his scoffing is what we call just, and has some foundation on truth; while again the laughter of fools, that vain sound said in Scripture to resemble the 'crackling of thorns under the pot' (which they cannot heat, but only soil and begrime), must be regarded, in these latter times, as a very serious addition to the sum of human wretchedness; nor perhaps will it always, —when the 'Increase of Crime in the Metropolis' comes to be debated again,—escape the vigilance of Parliament as hitherto.

We have, oftener than once, endeavoured to attach some meaning to that aphorism, vulgarly imputed to Shaftesbury, which, however, we can find nowhere in his works, that *ridicule is the test of truth*. But of all chimeras that ever advanced themselves in the shape of philosophical doctrines, this is to us the most formless and purely inconceivable. Did or could the unassisted human faculties ever understand it, much more believe it? Surely, so far as the common mind can discern, laughter seems to depend not less on the laugher than on the laughee: and now, who gave laughers a patent to be always just, and always omniscient? If the philosophers of Nootka Sound were pleased to laugh at the manœuvres of Cook's seamen, did that render these manœuvres useless; and were the seamen to stand idle, or to take to leather canoes, till the laughter abated? Let a discerning public judge.

But, leaving these questions for the present, we may observe at least that all great men have been careful to subordinate this talent or habit of ridicule; nay, in the ages which we consider the greatest, most of the arts that contribute to it have been thought disgraceful for freemen, and confined to the exercise of slaves. With Voltaire, however, there is no such subordination visible: by nature, or by practice, mockery has grown

to be the irresistible bias of his disposition; so that for him, in all matters, the first question is, not what is true, but what is false; not what is to be loved, and held fast, and earnestly laid to heart, but what is to be contemned, and derided, and sportfully cast out of doors. Here truly he earns abundant triumph as an image-breaker, but pockets little real wealth. Vanity, with its adjuncts, as we have said, finds rich solacement; but for aught better there is not much. Reverence, the highest feeling that man's nature is capable of, the crown of his whole moral manhood, and precious, like fine gold, were it in the rudest forms, he seems not to understand, or have heard of even by credible tradition. The glory of knowing and believing is all but a stranger to him; only with that of questioning and qualifying is he familiar. Accordingly, he sees but a little way into Nature: the mighty All, in its beauty, and infinite mysterious grandeur, humbling the small *Me* into nothingness, has never even for moments been revealed to him; only this or that other atom of it, and the differences and discrepancies of these two, has he looked into and noted down. His theory of the world, his picture of man and man's life, is little; for a Poet and Philosopher, even pitiful. Examine it in its highest developments, you find it an altogether vulgar picture; simply a reflex, with more or fewer mirrors, of Self and the poor interests of Self. 'The Divine Idea, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance,' was never more invisible to any man. He reads History not with the eye of a devout seer, or even of a critic; but through a pair of mere anti-catholic spectacles. It is not a mighty drama, enacted on the theatre of Infinitude, with Suns for lamps, and Eternity as a background; whose author is God, and whose purport and thousandfold moral lead us up to the 'dark with excess of light' of the Throne of God; but a poor wearisome debating-club dispute, spun through ten centuries, between the *Encyclopédie* and the *Sorbonne*. Wisdom or folly, nobleness or baseness, are merely superstitious or unbelieving: God's Universe is a larger Patrimony of St. Peter, from which it were well and pleasant to hunt out the Pope.

In this way, Voltaire's nature, which was originally vehement rather than deep, came, in its maturity, in spite of all his wonderful gifts, to be positively shallow. We find no heroism of character in him, from first to last; nay there is not, that we know of, one great thought in all his six-and-thirty quartos.

The high worth implanted in him by Nature, and still often manifested in his conduct, does not shine there like a light, but like a coruscation. The enthusiasm, proper to such a mind, visits him; but it has no abiding virtue in his thoughts, no local habitation and no name. There is in him a rapidity, but at the same time a pettiness; a certain violence, and fitful abruptness, which takes from him all dignity. Of his *emportemens*, and tragi-comical explosions, a thousand anecdotes are on record; neither is he, in these cases, a terrific volcano, but a mere bundle of rockets. He is nigh shooting poor Dorn, the Frankfort constable; actually fires a pistol, into the lobby, at him; and this, three days after that melancholy business of the '*Œuvre de Poéshie du Roi mon Maître*' had been finally adjusted. A bookseller, who, with the natural instinct of fallen mankind, overcharges him, receives from this Philosopher, by way of payment at sight, a slap on the face. Poor Longchamp, with considerable tact, and a praiseworthy air of second-table respectability, details various scenes of this kind: how Voltaire dashed away his combs, and maltreated his wig, and otherwise fiercely comported himself, the very first morning: how once, having a keenness of appetite, sharpened by walking and a diet of weak tea, he became uncommonly anxious for supper; and Clairaut and Madame du Châtelet, sunk in algebraic calculations, twice promised to come down, but still kept the dishes cooling, and the Philosopher at last desperately battered open their locked door with his foot; exclaiming, "*Vous êtes donc de concert pour me faire mourir?*"—And yet Voltaire had a true kindness of heart; all his domestics and dependents loved him, and continued with him. He has many elements of goodness, but floating loosely; nothing is combined in steadfast union. It is true, he presents in general a surface of smoothness, of cultured regularity; yet, under it, there is not the silent rock-bound strength of a World, but the wild tumults of a Chaos are ever bursting through. He is a man of power, but not of beneficent authority; we fear, but cannot reverence him; we feel him to be stronger, not higher.

Much of this spiritual shortcoming and pervertion might be due to natural defect; but much of it also is due to the age into which he was cast. It was an age of discord and division; the approach of a grand crisis in human affairs. Already we discern in it all the elements of the French Revolution; and

wonder, so easily do we forget how entangled and hidden the meaning of the present generally is to us, that all men did not foresee the comings-on of that fearful convulsion. On the one hand, a high all-attempting activity of Intellect; the most peremptory spirit of inquiry abroad on every subject; things human and things divine alike cited without misgivings before the same boastful tribunal of so-called Reason, which means here a merely argumentative Logic; the strong in mind excluded from his regular influence in the state, and deeply conscious of that injury. On the other hand, a privileged few, strong in the subjection of the many, yet in itself weak; a piebald, and for most part altogether decrepit battalion of Clergy, of purblind Nobility, or rather of Courtiers, for as yet the Nobility is mostly on the other side: these cannot fight with Logic, and the day of Persecution is well-nigh done. The whole force of law, indeed, is still in their hands; but the far deeper force, which alone gives efficacy to law, is hourly passing from them. Hope animates one side, fear the other; and the battle will be fierce and desperate. For there is wit without wisdom on the part of the self-styled Philosophers; feebleness with exasperation on the part of their opponents; pride enough on all hands, but little magnanimity; perhaps nowhere any pure love of truth, only everywhere the purest, most ardent love of self.

In such a state of things, there lay abundant principles of discord: these two influences hung like fast-gathering electric clouds, as yet on opposite sides of the horizon, but with a malignity of aspect, which boded, whenever they might meet, a sky of fire and blackness, thunderbolts to waste the earth; and the sun and stars, though but for a season, to be blotted out from the heavens. For there is no conducting medium to unite softly these hostile elements; there is no true virtue, no true wisdom, on the one side or on the other. Never perhaps was there an epoch, in the history of the world, when universal corruption called so loudly for reform; and they who undertook that task were men intrinsically so worthless. Not by Gracchi but by Catilines, not by Luthers but by Aretines, was Europe to be renovated. The task has been a long and bloody one; and is still far from done.

In this condition of affairs, what side such a man as Voltaire was to take could not be doubtful. Whether he ought to have taken either side; whether he should not rather have

stationed himself in the middle; the partisan of neither, perhaps hated by both; acknowledging and forwarding, and striving to reconcile, what truth was in each; and preaching forth a far deeper truth, which, if his own century had neglected it, had persecuted it, future centuries would have recognised as priceless: all this was another question. Of no man, however gifted, can we require what he has not to give: but Voltaire called himself Philosopher, nay *the* Philosopher. And such has often, indeed generally, been the fate of great men, and Lovers of Wisdom: their own age and country have treated them as of no account; in the great Corn-Exchange of the world, their pearls have seemed but spoiled barley, and been ignominiously rejected. Weak in adherents, strong only in their faith, in their indestructible consciousness of worth and well-doing, they have silently, or in words, appealed to coming ages, when their own ear would indeed be shut to the voice of love and of hatred, but the Truth that had dwelt in them would speak with a voice audible to all. Bacon left his works to future generations, when some centuries should have elapsed. 'Is it much for me,' said Kepler, in his isolation, and extreme need, 'that men should 'accept my discovery? If the Almighty waited six thousand 'years for one to see what He had made, I may surely wait 'two hundred for one to understand what I have seen!' All this, and more, is implied in love of wisdom, in genuine seeking of truth: the noblest function that can be appointed for a man, but requiring also the noblest man to fulfil it.

With Voltaire, however, there is no symptom, perhaps there was no conception, of such nobleness; the high call for which indeed, in the existing state of things, his intellect may have had as little the force to discern, as his heart had the force to obey. He follows a simpler course. Heedless of remoter issues, he adopts the cause of his own party; of that class with whom he lived, and was most anxious to stand well: he enlists in their ranks, not without hopes that he may one day rise to be their general. A resolution perfectly accordant with his prior habits, and temper of mind; and from which his whole subsequent procedure, and moral aspect as a man, naturally enough evolves itself. Not that we would say, Voltaire was a mere prize-fighter; one of 'Heaven's Swiss,' contending for a cause which he only half, or not at all approved of. Far from it. Doubtless he loved truth, doubtless he partially felt himself to be advocating

truth; nay we know not that he has ever yet, in a single instance, been convicted of wilfully perverting his belief; of uttering, in all his controversies, one deliberate falsehood. Nor should this negative praise seem an altogether slight one; for greatly were it to be wished that even the best of his better-intentioned opponents had always deserved the like. Nevertheless, his love of truth is not that deep infinite love, which beseems a Philosopher; which many ages have been fortunate enough to witness; nay, of which his own age had still some examples. It is a far inferior love, we should say, to that of poor Jean Jacques, half-sage, half-maniac as he was; it is more a prudent calculation than a passion. Voltaire loves Truth, but chiefly of the triumphant sort: we have no instance of his fighting for a quite discrowned and outcast Truth; it is chiefly when she walks abroad, in distress it may be, but still with queen-like insignia, and knighthoods and renown are to be earned in her battles, that he defends her, that he charges gallantly against the Cades and Tylers. Nay, at all times, belief itself seems, with him, to be less the product of Meditation than of Argument. His first question with regard to any doctrine, perhaps his final test of its worth and genuineness is: Can others be convinced of this? Can I truck it in the market for power? 'To such questioners,' it has been said, 'Truth, 'who buys not, and sells not, goes on her way, and makes no 'answer.'

In fact, if we inquire into Voltaire's ruling motive, we shall find that it was at bottom but a vulgar one: ambition, the desire of ruling, by such means as he had, over other men. He acknowledges no higher divinity than Public Opinion; for whatever he asserts or performs, the number of votes is the measure of strength and value. Yet let us be just to him; let us admit that he in some degree estimates his votes, as well as counts them. If love of fame, which, especially for such a man, we can only call another modification of Vanity, is always his ruling passion, he has a certain taste in gratifying it. His vanity, which cannot be extinguished, is ever skilfully concealed; even his just claims are never boisterously insisted on; throughout his whole life he shows no single feature of the quack. Nevertheless, even in the height of his glory, he has a strange sensitiveness to the judgment of the world: could he have contrived a Dionysius' Ear, in the Rue Traversière, we should have found

him watching at it, night and day. Let but any little evil-disposed Abbé, any Fréron or Piron,

Pauvre Piron, qui ne fut jamais rien,
Pas même Académicien,

write a libel or epigram on him, what a fluster he is in! We grant he forbore much, in these cases; manfully consumed his own spleen, and sometimes long held his peace; but it was his part to have always done so. Why should such a man ruffle himself with the spite of exceeding small persons? Why not let these poor devils write; why should not they earn a dishonest penny, at his expense, if they had no readier way? But Voltaire cannot part with his 'voices,' his 'most sweet voices:' for they are his god; take these, and what has he left? Accordingly, in literature and morals, in all his comings and goings, we find him striving, with a religious care, to sail strictly with the wind. In Art, the Parisian *Parterre* is his court of last appeal: he consults the *Café de Procope*, on his wisdom or his folly, as if it were a Delphic Oracle. The following adventure belongs to his fifty-fourth year, when his fame might long have seemed abundantly established. We translate from the Sieur Longchamp's thin, half-roguish, mildly obsequious, most lackey-like Narrative:

'Judges could appreciate the merits of *Sémiramis*, which has continued on the stage, and always been seen there with pleasure. Every one knows how the two principal parts in this piece contributed to the celebrity of two great tragedians, Mademoiselle Dumèsnil and M. le Kain. The enemies of M. de Voltaire renewed their attempts in the subsequent representations; but it only the better confirmed his triumph. Piron, to console himself for the defeat of his party, had recourse to his usual remedy; pelting the piece with some paltry epigrams, which did it no harm.

'Nevertheless, M. de Voltaire, who always loved to correct his works, and perfect them, became desirous to learn, more specially and at first hand, what good or ill the public were saying of his Tragedy; and it appeared to him that he could nowhere learn it better than in the *Café de Procope*, which was also called the *Antre* (Cavern) *de Procope*, because it was very dark even in full day, and ill-lighted in the evenings; and because you often saw there a set of lank, sallow poets, who had somewhat the air of apparitions. In this Café, which fronts the *Comédie Française*, had been held, for more than sixty years, the tribunal of those self-called *Aristarchs*, who fancied they could pass sentence without appeal, on plays, authors and actors. M. de Voltaire wished to compear there, but in disguise and altogether *incognito*. It

was on coming out from the playhouse that the judges usually proceeded thither, to open what they called their great sessions. On the second night of *Sémiramis* he borrowed a clergyman's clothes; dressed himself in cassock and long cloak: black stockings, girdle, bands, breviary itself; nothing was forgotten. He clapt on a large peruke, unpowdered, very ill combed, which covered more than the half of his cheeks, and left nothing to be seen but the end of a long nose. The peruke was surmounted by a large three-cornered hat, corners half bruised-in. In this equipment, then, the author of *Sémiramis* proceeded on foot to the *Café de Procope*, where he squatted himself in a corner; and waiting for the end of the play, called for a *bavaroise*, a small roll of bread and the Gazette. It was not long till those familiars of the *Parterre* and tenants of the *Café* stept in. They instantly began discussing the new Tragedy. Its partisans and its adversaries pleaded their cause with warmth; each giving his reasons. Impartial persons also spoke their sentiment; and repeated some fine verses of the piece. During all this time, M. de Voltaire, with spectacles on nose, head stooping over the Gazette which he pretended to be reading, was listening to the debate; profiting by reasonable observations, suffering much to hear very absurd ones, and not answer them, which irritated him. Thus, during an hour and a half, had he the courage and patience to hear *Sémiramis* talked of and babbled of, without speaking a word. At last, all these pretended judges of the fame of authors having gone their ways, without converting one another, M. de Voltaire also went off; took a coach in the Rue Mazarine, and returned home about eleven o'clock. Though I knew of his disguise, I confess I was struck and almost frightened to see him accoutred so. I took him for a spectre, or shade of Ninus, that was appearing to me; or, at least, for one of those ancient Irish debaters, arrived at the end of their career, after wearing themselves out in school-syllogisms. I helped him to doff all that apparatus, which I carried next morning to its true owner,—a Doctor of the Sorbonne.'

This stroke of art, which cannot in anywise pass for sublime, might have its uses and rational purpose in one case, and only in one: if *Sémiramis* was meant to be a popular show, that was to live or die by its first impression on the idle multitude; which accordingly we must infer to have been its real, at least its chief destination. In any other case, we cannot but consider this Haroun-Alraschid visit to the *Café de Procope* as questionable, and altogether inadequate. If *Sémiramis* was a Poem, a living Creation, won from the empyrean by the silent power and long-continued Promethean toil of its author, what could the *Café de Procope* know of it, what could all Paris know of it, 'on the second night'? Had it been a Milton's *Paradise Lost*, they might have despised it till after the fiftieth year!

True, the object of the Poet is, and must be, to 'instruct by pleasing,' yet not by pleasing this man and that man; only by pleasing *man*, by speaking to the pure nature of man, can any real 'instruction,' in this sense, be conveyed. Vain does it seem to search for a judgment of this kind in the largest *Café*, in the largest Kingdom, 'on the second night.' The deep, clear consciousness of one mind comes infinitely nearer it, than the loud outcry of a million that have no such consciousness; whose 'talk,' or whose 'babble,' but distracts the listener; and to most genuine Poets has, from of old, been in a great measure indifferent.

For the multitude of voices is no authority; a thousand voices may not, strictly examined, amount to one vote. Mankind in this world are divided into flocks, and follow their several bell-wethers. Now, it is well known, let the bell-wether rush through any gap, the rest rush after him, were it into bottomless quagmires. Nay, so conscientious are sheep in this particular, as a quaint naturalist and moralist has noted, 'if 'you hold a stick before the wether, so that he is forced to vault 'in his passage, the whole flock will do the like when the stick 'is withdrawn; and the thousandth sheep shall be seen vault-'ing impetuously over air, as the first did over an otherwise 'impassable barrier!' A farther peculiarity which, in consulting Acts of Parliament, and other authentic records, not only as regards 'Catholic Disabilities,' but many other matters, you may find curiously verified in the human species also!—On the whole, we must consider this excursion to *Procope's* literary Cavern as illustrating Voltaire in rather pleasant style; but nowise much to his honour. Fame seems a far too high, if not the highest object with him; nay sometimes even popularity is clutched at: we see no heavenly polestar in this voyage of his; but only the guidance of a proverbially uncertain *wind*.

Voltaire reproachfully says of St. Louis, that 'he ought to have been above his age;' but in his own case we can find few symptoms of such heroic superiority. The same perpetual appeal to his contemporaries, the same intense regard to reputation, as he viewed it, prescribes for him both his enterprises and his manner of conducting them. His aim is to please the more enlightened, at least the politer part of the world; and he offers them simply what they most wish for, be it in theatrical shows for their pastime, or in sceptical doctrines for their edification.

For this latter purpose, Ridicule is the weapon he selects, and it suits him well. This was not the age of deep thoughts; no Duc de Richelieu, no Prince Conti, no Frederick the Great would have listened to such: only sportful contempt, and a thin conversational logic will avail. There may be wool-quilts, which the lath-sword of Harlequin will pierce, when the club of Hercules has rebounded from them in vain. As little was this an age for high virtues; no heroism, in any form, is required, or even acknowledged; but only, in all forms, a certain *bienséance*.

To this rule also Voltaire readily conforms; indeed, he finds no small advantage in it. For a lax public morality not only allows him the indulgence of many a little private vice, and brings him in this and the other windfall of *menus plaisirs*, but opens him the readiest resource in many enterprises of danger. Of all men, Voltaire has the least disposition to increase the Army of Martyrs. No testimony will he seal with his blood; scarcely any will he so much as sign with ink. His obnoxious doctrines, as we have remarked, he publishes under a thousand concealments; with underplots, and wheels within wheels; so that his whole track is in darkness, only his works see the light. No Proteus is so nimble, or assumes so many shapes: if, by rare chance, caught sleeping, he whisks through the smallest hole, and is out of sight, while the noose is getting ready. Let his judges take him to task, he will shuffle and evade; if directly questioned, he will even lie. In regard to this last point, the Marquis de Condorcet has set up a defence for him, which has at least the merit of being frank enough.

'The necessity of lying in order to disavow any work,' says he, 'is an extremity equally repugnant to conscience and nobleness of character: but the crime lies with those unjust men, who render such disavowal necessary to the safety of him whom they force to it. If you have made a crime of what is not one; if, by absurd or by arbitrary laws, you have infringed the natural right, which all men have, not only to form an opinion, but to render it public; then you deserve to lose the right which every man has of hearing the truth from the mouth of another; a right which is the sole basis of that rigorous obligation, not to lie. If it is not permitted to deceive, the reason is, that to deceive any one, is to do him a wrong, or expose yourself to do him one; but a wrong supposes a right; and no one has the right of seeking to secure himself the means of committing an injustice.'[8]

[8] *Vie de Voltaire*, p. 32.

It is strange, how scientific discoveries do maintain themselves: here, quite in other hands, and in an altogether different dialect, we have the old Catholic doctrine, if it ever was more than a Jesuitic one, 'that faith need not be kept with heretics.' Truth, it appears, is too precious an article for our enemies; is fit only for friends, for those who will pay us if we tell it them. It may be observed, however, that granting Condorcet's premises, this doctrine also must be granted, as indeed is usual with that sharp-sighted writer. If the doing of right depends on the receiving of it; if our fellow-men, in this world, are not persons, but mere things, that for services bestowed will return services,—steam-engines that will manufacture calico, if we put in coals and water,—then doubtless, the calico ceasing, our coals and water may also rationally cease; the questioner threatening to injure us for the truth, we may rationally tell him lies. But if, on the other hand, our fellow-man is no steam-engine, but a man; united with us, and with all men, and with the Maker of all men, in sacred, mysterious, indissoluble bonds, in an All-embracing Love, that encircles alike the seraph and the glow-worm; then will our duties to him rest on quite another basis than this very humble one of *quid pro quo;* and the Marquis de Condorcet's conclusion will be false; and might, in its practical extensions, be infinitely pernicious.

Such principles and habits, too lightly adopted by Voltaire, acted, as it seems to us, with hostile effect on his moral nature, not originally of the noblest sort, but which, under other influences, might have attained to far greater nobleness. As it is, we see in him simply a Man of the World, such as Paris and the eighteenth century produced and approved of: a polite, attractive, most cultivated, but essentially self-interested man; not without highly amiable qualities; indeed, with a general disposition which we could have accepted without disappointment in a mere Man of the World, but must find very defective, sometimes altogether out of place, in a Poet and Philosopher. Above this character of a Parisian 'honourable man,' he seldom or never rises; nay sometimes we find him hovering on the very lowest boundaries of it, or perhaps even fairly below it. We shall nowise accuse him of excessive regard for money, of any wish to shine by the influence of mere wealth: let those commercial speculations, including even the victualling-contracts, pass for laudable prudence, for love of independence, and

of the power to do good. But what are we to make of that hunting after pensions, and even after mere titles? There is an assiduity displayed here, which sometimes almost verges towards sneaking. Well might it provoke the scorn of Alfieri; for there is nothing better than the spirit of 'a French plebeian' apparent in it. Much, we know, very much should be allowed for difference of national manners, which in general mainly determine the meaning of such things: nevertheless, to our insular feelings, that famous *Trajan est-il content?* especially when we consider who the Trajan was, will always remain an unfortunate saying. The more so, as Trajan himself turned his back on it, without answer; declining, indeed, through life, to listen to the voice of this charmer, or disturb his own '*âme paisible*,' for one moment, though with the best philosopher in Nature. Nay, Pompadour herself was applied to; and even some considerable progress made, by that underground passage, had not an envious hand too soon and fatally intervened. D'Alembert says, there are two things that can reach the top of a pyramid, the eagle and the reptile. Apparently, Voltaire wished to combine both methods; and he had with one of them but indifferent success.

The truth is, we are trying Voltaire by too high a standard; comparing him with an ideal, which he himself never strove after, perhaps never seriously aimed at. He is no great Man, but only a great *Persifleur;* a man for whom life, and all that pertains to it, has, at best, but a despicable meaning; who meets its difficulties not with earnest force, but with gay agility; and is found always at the top, less by power in swimming, than by lightness in floating. Take him in his character, forgetting that any other was ever ascribed to him, and we find that he enacted it almost to perfection. Never man better understood the whole secret of *Persiflage;* meaning thereby not only the external faculty of polite contempt, but that art of general inward contempt, by which a man of this sort endeavours to subject the circumstances of his Destiny to his Volition, and be, what is the instinctive effort of all men, though in the midst of material Necessity, morally Free. Voltaire's latent derision is as light, copious and all-pervading as the derision which he utters. Nor is this so simple an attainment as we might fancy; a certain kind and degree of Stoicism, or approach to Stoicism, is

necessary for the completed *Persifleur;* as for moral, or even practical completion, in any other way. The most indifferent-minded man is not by nature indifferent to his own pain and pleasure: this is an indifference which he must by some method study to acquire, or acquire the show of; and which, it is fair to say, Voltaire manifests in a rather respectable degree.

Without murmuring, he has reconciled himself to most things: the human lot, in this lower world, seems a strange business, yet, on the whole, with more of the farce in it than of the tragedy; to him it is nowise heartrending that this Planet of ours should be sent sailing through Space, like a miserable aimless Ship-of-Fools, and he himself be a fool among the rest, and only a very little wiser than they. He does not, like Bolingbroke, 'patronise Providence,' though such sayings as *Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer*, seem now and then to indicate a tendency of that sort: but at all events, he never openly levies war against Heaven; well knowing that the time spent in frantic malediction, directed *thither*, might be spent otherwise with more profit. There is, truly, no *Werterism* in him, either in its bad or its good sense. If he sees no unspeakable majesty in heaven and earth, neither does he see any unsufferable horror there. His view of the world is a cool, gently scornful, altogether prosaic one: his sublimest Apocalypse of Nature lies in the microscope and telescope; the Earth is a place for producing corn; the Starry Heavens are admirable as a nautical timekeeper. Yet, like a prudent man, he has adjusted himself to his condition, such as it is: he does not chant any *Miserere* over human life, calculating that no charitable dole, but only laughter, would be the reward of such an enterprise; does not hang or drown himself, clearly understanding that death of itself will soon save him that trouble. Affliction, it is true, has not for him any precious jewel in its head; on the contrary, it is an unmixed nuisance; yet, happily, not one to be howled over, so much as one to be speedily removed out of sight: if he does not learn from it Humility, and the sublime lesson of Resignation, neither does it teach him hard-heartedness and sickly discontent; but he bounds lightly over it, leaving both the jewel and the toad at a safe distance behind him.

Nor was Voltaire's history without perplexities enough to keep this principle in exercise; to try whether in life, as in literature, the *ridiculum* were really better than the *acre*. We

must own, that on no occasion does it altogether fail him; never does he seem perfectly at a nonplus; no adventure is so hideous, that he cannot, in the long-run, find some means to laugh at it, and forget it. Take, for instance, that last ill-omened visit of his to Frederick the Great. This was, probably, the most mortifying incident in Voltaire's whole life: an open experiment, in the sight of all Europe, to ascertain whether French Philosophy had virtue enough in it to found any friendly union, in such circumstances, even between its great master and his most illustrious disciple; and an experiment which answered in the negative. As was natural enough; for Vanity is of a divisive, not of a uniting nature; and between the King of Letters and the King of Armies there existed no other tie. They should have kept up an interchange of flattery, from afar: gravitating towards one another like celestial luminaries, if they reckoned themselves such; yet always with a due centrifugal force; for if either shot madly from his sphere, nothing but collision, and concussion, and mutual recoil, could be the consequence. On the whole, we must pity Frederick, environed with that cluster of Philosophers: doubtless he meant rather well; yet the French at Rossbach, with guns in their hands, were but a small matter, compared with these French in Sans-Souci. Maupertuis sits sullen, monosyllabic; gloomy like the bear of his own arctic zone: Voltaire is the mad piper that will make him dance to tunes and amuse the people. In this royal circle, with its parasites and bashaws, what heats and jealousies must there not have been; what secret heart-burnings, smooth-faced malice, plottings, counter-plottings, and laurel-water pharmacy, in all its branches, before the ring of etiquette fairly burst asunder, and the establishment, so to speak, exploded!

Yet over all these distressing matters Voltaire has thrown a soft veil of gaiety; he remembers neither Dr. Akakia, nor Dr. Akakia's patron, with any animosity; but merely as actors in the grand farce of life along with him, a new scene of which has now commenced, quite displacing the other from the stage. The arrest at Frankfort, indeed, is a sour morsel; but this too he swallows, with an effort. Frederick, as we are given to understand, had these whims by kind; was, indeed, a wonderful scion from such a stock; for what could equal the avarice, malice and rabid snappishness of old Frederick William the father?

'He had a minister at the Hague, named Luicius,' says the wit: 'this Luicius was, of all royal ministers extant, the worst paid. The poor man, with a view to warm himself, had a few trees cut down, in the garden of Honslardik, then belonging to the House of Prussia; immediately thereafter he received despatches from the King his master, keeping back a year of his salary. Luicius, in despair, cut his throat with the only razor he had (*avec le seul rasoir qu'il eût*): an old lackey came to his assistance, and unfortunately saved his life. At an after period, I myself saw his Excellency at the Hague, and gave him an alms at the gate of that Palace called *La Vieille Cour*, which belongs to the King of Prussia, where this unhappy Ambassador had lived twelve years.'

With the *Roi-Philosophe* himself Voltaire in a little while recommences correspondence; and, to all appearance, proceeds quietly in his office of 'buckwasher,' that is, of verse-corrector to his Majesty, as if nothing whatever had happened.

Again, what human pen can describe the troubles this unfortunate philosopher had with his women? A gadding, feather-brained, capricious, old-coquettish, embittered and embittering set of wantons from the earliest to the last! Widow Denis, for example, that disobedient Niece, whom he rescued from furnished lodgings and spare diet, into pomp and plenty, how did she pester the last stage of his existence, for twenty-four years long! Blind to the peace and roses of Ferney; ever hankering and fretting after Parisian display; not without flirtation, though advanced in life; losing money at play, and purloining wherewith to make it good; scolding his servants, quarrelling with his secretaries, so that the too-indulgent uncle must turn-off his beloved Collini, nay almost be run through the body by him, for her sake! The good Wagnière, who succeeded this fiery Italian in the secretaryship, and loved Voltaire with a most creditable affection, cannot, though a simple, humble and philanthropic man, speak of Madame Denis without visible overflowings of gall. He openly accuses her of hastening her uncle's death by her importunate stratagems to keep him in Paris, where was her heaven. Indeed it is clear that, his goods and chattels once made sure of, her chief care was that so fiery a patient might die soon enough; or, at best, according to her own confession, 'how she was to get him buried.' We have known superannuated grooms, nay effete saddle-horses, regarded with more real sympathy in their home, than was the best of uncles by the worst of nieces. Had not this surprising old man

retained the sharpest judgment, and the gayest, easiest temper, his last days and last years must have been a continued scene of violence and tribulation.

Little better, worse in several respects, though at a time when he could better endure it, was the far-famed Marquise du Châtelet. Many a tempestuous day and wakeful night had he with that scientific and too-fascinating shrew. She speculated in mathematics and metaphysics; but was an adept also in far, very far different acquirements. Setting aside its whole criminality, which, indeed, perhaps went for little there, this literary amour wears but a mixed aspect; short sun-gleams, with long tropical tornadoes; touches of guitar-music, soon followed by Lisbon earthquakes. Marmontel, we remember, speaks of *knives* being used, at least brandished, and for quite other purposes than carving. Madame la Marquise was no saint, in any sense; but rather a Socrates' spouse, who would keep patience, and the whole philosophy of gaiety, in constant practice. Like Queen Elizabeth, if she had the talents of a man, she had more than the caprices of a woman.

We shall take only one item, and that a small one, in this mountain of misery: her strange habits and methods of locomotion. She is perpetually travelling: a peaceful philosopher is lugged over the world, to Cirey, to Lunéville, to that *pied à terre* in Paris; resistance avails not; here, as in so many other cases, *il faut se ranger*. Sometimes, precisely on the eve of such a departure, her domestics, exasperated by hunger and ill-usage, will strike work, in a body; and a new set has to be collected at an hour's warning. Then Madame has been known to keep the postillions cracking and *sacre*-ing at the gate from dawn till dewy eve, simply because she was playing cards, and the games went against her. But figure a lean and vivid-tempered philosopher starting from Paris at last; under cloud of night; during hard frost; in a huge lumbering coach, or rather wagon, compared with which, indeed, the generality of modern wagons were a luxurious conveyance. With four starved, and perhaps spavined hacks, he slowly sets forth, 'under a mountain of bandboxes:' at his side sits the wandering virago; in front of him a serving-maid, with additional bandboxes '*et divers effets de sa maîtresse*.' At the next stage, the postillions have to be beat up; they come out swearing. Cloaks and furpelisses avail little against the January cold; 'time and hours'

are, once more, the only hope; but, lo, at the tenth mile, this Tyburn-coach breaks down! One many-voiced discordant wail shrieks through the solitude, making night hideous,—but in vain; the axletree has given way, the vehicle has overset, and marchionesses, chambermaids, bandboxes and philosophers, are weltering in inextricable chaos.

'The carriage was in the stage next Nangis, about half-way to that town, when the hind axletree broke, and it tumbled on the road, to M. de Voltaire's side: Madame du Châtelet, and her maid, fell above him, with all their bundles and bandboxes, for these were not tied to the front, but only piled up on both hands of the maid; and so, observing the laws of equilibrium and gravitation of bodies, they rushed towards the corner where M. de Voltaire lay squeezed together. Under so many burdens, which half suffocated him, he kept shouting bitterly (*poussait des cris aigus*); but it was impossible to change place; all had to remain as it was, till the two lackeys, one of whom was hurt by the fall, could come up, with the postillions, to disencumber the vehicle; they first drew out all the luggage, next the women, then M. de Voltaire. Nothing could be got out except by the top, that is, by the coach-door, which now opened upwards: one of the lackeys and a postillion clambering aloft, and fixing themselves on the body of the vehicle, drew them up, as from a well; seizing the first limb that came to hand, whether arm or leg; and then passed them down to the two stationed below, who set them finally on the ground.'[9]

What would Dr. Kitchiner, with his *Traveller's Oracle*, have said to all this? For there is snow on the ground: and four peasants must be roused from a village half a league off, before that accursed vehicle can so much as be lifted from its beam-ends! Vain it is for Longchamp, far in advance, sheltered in a hospitable though half-dismantled *château*, to pluck pigeons and be in haste to roast them: they will never, never be eaten to supper, scarcely to breakfast next morning!—Nor is it now only, but several times, that this unhappy axletree plays them foul; nay once, beggared by Madame's gambling, they have not cash to pay for mending it, and the smith, though they are in keenest flight, almost for their lives, will not trust them.

We imagine that these are trying things for any philosopher. Of the thousand other more private and perennial grievances; of certain discoveries and explanations, especially, which it still seems surprising that human philosophy could have tolerated, we make no mention; indeed, with regard to the latter, few

[9] Vol. ii. p. 166.

earthly considerations could tempt a Reviewer of sensibility to mention them in this place.

The Marquise du Châtelet, and her husband, have been much wondered at in England: the calm magnanimity with which M. le Marquis conforms to the custom of the country, to the wishes of his helpmate, and leaves her, he himself meanwhile fighting, or at least drilling, for his King, to range over Space, in quest of loves and lovers; his friendly discretion, in this particular; no less so, his blithe benignant gullibility, the instant a *contretems de famille* renders his countenance needful, —have had all justice done them among us. His lady too is a wonder; offers no mean study to psychologists: she is a fair experiment to try how far that Delicacy, which we reckon innate in females, is only incidental and the product of fashion; how far a woman, not merely immodest, but without the slightest fig-leaf of common decency remaining, with the whole character, in short, of a *male* debauchee, may still have any moral worth as a woman. We ourselves have wondered a little over both these parties; and over the goal to which so strange a 'progress of society' might be tending. But still more wonderful, not without a shade of the sublime, has appeared to us the cheerful thraldom of this maltreated philosopher; and with what exhaustless patience, not being wedded, he endured all these forced-marches, whims, irascibilities, delinquencies and thousandfold unreasons; braving 'the battle and the breeze,' on that wild Bay of Biscay, for such a period. Fifteen long years, and was not mad, or a suicide at the end of them! But the like fate, it would seem, though worthy D'Israeli has omitted to enumerate it in his *Calamities of Authors*, is not unknown in literature. Pope also had his Mrs. Martha Blount; and in the midst of that warfare with united Duncedom, his daily tale of Egyptian bricks to bake. Let us pity the lot of genius, in this sublunary sphere!

Every one knows the earthly termination of Madame la Marquise; and how, by a strange, almost satirical *Nemesis*, she was taken in her own nets, and her worst sin became her final punishment. To no purpose was the unparalleled credulity of M. le Marquis; to no purpose, the amplest toleration, and even helpful knavery of M. de Voltaire; '*les assiduités de M. de Saint-Lambert*,' and the unimaginable consultations to which they gave rise at Cirey, were frightfully parodied in the

end. The last scene was at Lunéville, in the peaceable court of King Stanislaus.

'Seeing that the aromatic vinegar did no good, we tried to recover her from the sudden lethargy by rubbing her feet, and striking in the palms of her hands; but it was of no use: she had ceased to be. The maid was sent off to Madame de Boufflers' apartment, to inform the company that Madame du Châtelet was worse. Instantly they all rose from the supper-table: M. du Châtelet, M. de Voltaire, and the other guests, rushed into the room. So soon as they understood the truth, there was a deep consternation; to tears, to cries succeeded a mournful silence. The husband was led away, the other individuals went out successively, expressing the keenest sorrow. M. de Voltaire and M. de Saint-Lambert remained the last by the bedside, from which they could not be drawn away. At length, the former, absorbed in deep grief, left the room, and with difficulty reached the main door of the Castle, not knowing whither he went. Arrived there, he fell down at the foot of the outer stairs, and near the box of a sentry, where his head came on the pavement. His lackey, who was following, seeing him fall and struggle on the ground, ran forward and tried to lift him. At this moment, M. de Saint-Lambert, retiring by the same way, also arrived; and observing M. de Voltaire in that situation, hastened to assist the lackey. No sooner was M. de Voltaire on his feet, than, opening his eyes, dimmed with tears, and recognising M. de Saint-Lambert, he said to him, with sobs and the most pathetic accent: "Ah, my friend, it is you that have killed her!" Then, all on a sudden, as if he were starting from a deep sleep, he exclaimed in a tone of reproach and despair: "*Eh! mon Dieu! Monsieur, de quoi vous avisiez-vous de lui faire un enfant?*" They parted thereupon, without adding a single word; and retired to their several apartments, overwhelmed and almost annihilated by the excess of their sorrow.'[10]

Among all threnetical discourses on record, this last between men overwhelmed and almost annihilated by the excess of their sorrow, has probably an unexampled character. Some days afterwards, the first paroxysm of 'reproach and despair' being somewhat assuaged, the sorrowing widower, not the glad legal one, composed this quatrain:

L'univers a perdu la sublime Emilie.
Elle aima les plaisirs, les arts, la vérité:
Les dieux, en lui donnant leur âme et leur génie,
N'avaient gardé pour eux que l'immortalité.

After which, reflecting, perhaps, that with this sublime Emilia, so meritoriously singular in loving pleasure, 'his happiness had

[10] Vol. ii. p. 250.

been chiefly on paper,' he, like the bereaved Universe, consoled himself, and went on his way.

Woman, it has been sufficiently demonstrated, was given to man as a benefit, and for mutual support; a precious ornament and staff whereupon to lean in many trying situations: but to Voltaire she proved, so unlucky was he in this matter, little else than a broken reed, which only ran into his hand. We confess that, looking over the manifold trials of this poor philosopher with the softer, or as he may have reckoned it, the harder sex,—from the Dutchwoman who published his juvenile letters, to the Niece Denis who as good as killed him with racketing,—we see, in this one province, very great scope for almost all the cardinal virtues. And to these internal convulsions add an incessant series of controversies and persecutions, political, religious, literary, from without; and we have a life quite rent asunder, horrent with asperities and chasms, where even a stout traveller might have faltered. Over all which Chamouni-Needles and Staubbach-Falls the great *Persifleur* skims along in this his little poetical air-ship, more softly than if he travelled the smoothest of merely prosaic roads.

Leaving out of view the worth or worthlessness of such a temper of mind, we are bound, in all seriousness, to say, both that it seems to have been Voltaire's highest conception of moral excellence, and that he has pursued and realised it with no small success. One great praise therefore he deserves,—that of unity with himself; that of *having* an aim, and steadfastly endeavouring after it, nay, as we have found, of attaining it; for his ideal Voltaire seems, to an unusual degree, manifested, made practically apparent in the real one. There can be no doubt but this attainment of *Persifleur*, in the wide sense we here give it, was of all others the most admired and sought after in Voltaire's age and country; nay, in our own age and country we have still innumerable admirers of it, and unwearied seekers after it, on every hand of us: nevertheless, we cannot but believe that its acme is past; that the best sense of our generation has already weighed its significance, and found it wanting. Voltaire himself, it seems to us, were he alive at this day, would find other tasks than that of mockery, especially of mockery in that style: it is not by Derision and Denial, but by far deeper, more earnest, diviner means that aught truly great has been effected for mankind; that the fabric of man's life

has been reared, through long centuries, to its present height. If we admit that this chief of *Persifleurs* had a steady conscious aim in life, the still higher praise of having had a right or noble aim cannot be conceded him without many limitations, and may, plausibly enough, be altogether denied.

At the same time, let it not be forgotten, that amid all these blighting influences, Voltaire maintains a certain indestructible humanity of nature; a soul never deaf to the cry of wretchedness; never utterly blind to the light of truth, beauty, goodness. It is even, in some measure, poetically interesting to observe this fine contradiction in him: the heart acting without directions from the head, or perhaps against its directions; the man virtuous, as it were, in spite of himself. For, at all events, it will be granted that, as a private man, his existence was beneficial, not hurtful, to his fellow-men: the Calases, the Sirvens, and so many orphans and outcasts whom he cherished and protected, ought to cover a multitude of sins. It was his own sentiment, and to all appearance a sincere one:

J'ai fait un peu de bien; c'est mon meilleur ouvrage.

Perhaps there are few men, with such principles and such temptations as his were, that could have led such a life; few that could have done his work, and come through it with cleaner hands. If we call him the greatest of all *Persifleurs*, let us add that, morally speaking also, he is the best: if he excels all men in universality, sincerity, polished clearness of Mockery, he perhaps combines with it as much worth of heart as, in any man, that habit can admit of.

It is now wellnigh time that we should quit this part of our subject: nevertheless, in seeking to form some picture of Voltaire's practical life, and the character, outward as well as inward, of his appearance in society, our readers will not grudge us a few glances at the last and most striking scene he enacted there. To our view, that final visit to Paris has a strange half-frivolous, half-fateful aspect; there is, as it were, a sort of dramatic justice in this catastrophe, that he, who had all his life hungered and thirsted after public favour, should at length die by excess of it; should find the door of his Heaven-on-earth unexpectedly thrown wide open, and enter there, only to be, as he himself said, 'smothered under roses.' Had Paris any suit-

able theogony or theology, as Rome and Athens had, this might almost be reckoned, as those Ancients accounted of death by lightning, a sacred death, a death from the gods; from their many-headed god, POPULARITY. In the benignant quietude of Ferney, Voltaire had lived long, and as his friends calculated, might still have lived long; but a series of trifling causes lures him to Paris, and in three months he is no more. At all hours of his history, he might have said with Alexander: "O Athenians, what toil do I undergo to please you!" and the last pleasure his Athenians demand of him is, that he would die for them.

Considered with reference to the world at large, this journey is farther remarkable. It is the most splendid triumph of that nature recorded in these ages; the loudest and showiest homage ever paid to what we moderns call Literature; to a man that had merely thought, and published his thoughts. Much false tumult, no doubt, there was in it; yet also a certain deeper significance. It is interesting to see how universal and eternal in man is love of wisdom; how the highest and the lowest, how supercilious princes, and rude peasants, and all men must alike show honour to Wisdom, or the appearance of Wisdom; nay, properly speaking, can show honour to nothing else. For it is not in the power of all Xerxes' hosts to bend one thought of our proud heart: these 'may destroy the case of Anaxarchus; himself they cannot reach:' only to spiritual worth can the spirit do reverence; only in a soul deeper and better than ours can we see any heavenly mystery, and in humbling ourselves feel ourselves exalted. That the so ebullient enthusiasm of the French was in this case perfectly well directed, we cannot undertake to say: yet we rejoice to see and know that such a principle exists perennially in man's inmost bosom; that there is no heart so sunk and stupefied, none so withered and pampered, but the felt presence of a nobler heart will inspire it and lead it captive.

Few royal progresses, few Roman triumphs, have equalled this long triumph of Voltaire. On his journey, at Bourg-en-Bresse, 'he was recognised,' says Wagnière, 'while the horses 'were changing, and in a few moments the whole town crowded 'about the carriage; so that he was forced to lock himself for 'some time in a room of the inn.' The Maître-de-poste ordered his postillion to yoke better horses, and said to him with

a broad oath: "*Va bon train, crève mes chevaux, je m'en f—; tu mènes M. de Voltaire!*" At Dijon, there were persons of distinction that wished even to dress themselves as waiters, that they might serve him at supper, and see him by this stratagem.

'At the barrier of Paris,' continues Wagnière, 'the officers asked if we had nothing with us contrary to the King's regulations: "On my word, gentlemen, *Ma foi, Messieurs,*" replied M. de Voltaire, "I believe there is nothing contraband here except myself." I alighted from the carriage, that the inspector might more readily examine it. One of the guards said to his comrade: *C'est, pardieu! M. de Voltaire.* He plucked at the coat of the person who was searching, and repeated the same words, looking fixedly at me. I could not help laughing; then all gazing with the greatest astonishment mingled with respect, begged M. de Voltaire to pass on whither he pleased.'[11]

Intelligence soon circulated over Paris; scarcely could the arrival of Kien-Long, or the Grand Lama of Thibet, have excited greater ferment. Poor Longchamp, demitted, or rather dismissed from Voltaire's service eight-and-twenty years before, and now, as a retired map-dealer (having resigned in favour of his son), living quietly '*dans un petit logement à part,*' a fine smooth, garrulous old man,—heard the news next morning in his remote *logement,* in the Estrapade; and instantly huddled-on his clothes, though he had not been out for two days, to go and see what truth was in it.

'Several persons of my acquaintance, whom I met, told me that they had heard the same. I went purposely to the *Café Procope,* where this news formed the subject of conversation among several politicians, or men of letters, who talked of it with warmth. To assure myself still farther, I walked thence towards the *Quai des Théatins,* where he had alighted the night before, and, as was said, taken up his lodging in a mansion near the church. Coming out from the Rue de la Seine, I saw afar off a great number of people gathered on the Quai, not far from the Pont-Royal. Approaching nearer, I observed that this crowd was collected in front of the Marquis de Villette's Hôtel, at the corner of the Rue de Beaune. I inquired what the matter was. The people answered me, that M. de Voltaire was in that house; and they were waiting to see him when he came out. They were not sure, however, whether he would come out that day; for it was natural to think that an old man of eighty-four might need a day or two of rest. From that moment, I no longer doubted the arrival of M. de Voltaire in Paris.'[12]

[11] Vol. i. p. 121.

[12] Vol. ii. p. 353.

By dint of address, Longchamp, in process of time, contrived to see his old master; had an interview of ten minutes; was for falling at his feet; and wept with sad presentiments at parting. Ten such minutes were a great matter; for Voltaire had his levees and couchees, more crowded than those of any Emperor; princes and peers thronged his antechamber; and when he went abroad, his carriage was as the nucleus of a comet, whose train extended over whole districts of the city. He himself, says Wagnière, expressed dissatisfaction at much of this. Nevertheless, there were some plaudits which, as he confessed, went to his heart. Condorcet mentions that once a person in the crowd, inquiring who this great man was, a poor woman answered, "*C'est le sauveur des Calas.*" Of a quite different sort was the tribute paid him by a quack, in the Place Louis Quinze, haranguing a mixed multitude on the art of juggling with cards: "*Here*, gentlemen," said he, "is a trick I learned at Ferney, from that great man who makes so much noise among you, that famous M. de Voltaire, the master of us all!" In fact, mere gaping curiosity, and even ridicule, was abroad, as well as real enthusiasm. The clergy too were recoiling into ominous groups; already some Jesuitic drums ecclesiastic had beat to arms.

Figuring the lean, tottering, lonely old man in the midst of all this, how he looks into it, clear and alert, though no longer strong and calm, we feel drawn towards him by some tie of affection, of kindly sympathy. Longchamp says, he appeared 'extremely worn, though still in the possession of all his senses, 'and with a very firm voice.' The following little sketch, by a hostile journalist of the day, has fixed itself deeply with us:

'M. de Voltaire appeared in full dress, on Tuesday, for the first time since his arrival in Paris. He had on a red coat lined with ermine; a large peruke, in the fashion of Louis XIV., black, unpowdered; and in which his withered visage was so buried that you saw only his two eyes shining like carbuncles. His head was surmounted by a square red cap in the form of a crown, which seemed only laid on. He had in his hand a small nibbed cane; and the public of Paris, not accustomed to see him in this accoutrement, laughed a good deal. This personage, singular in all, wishes doubtless to have nothing in common with ordinary men.'[13]

This head,—this wondrous microcosm in the *grande per-*

[13] Vol. ii. p. 466.

ruque à la Louis XIV,—was so soon to be distenanted of all its cunning gifts; these eyes, shining like carbuncles, were so soon to be closed in long night!—We must now give the coronation ceremony, of which the reader may have heard so much: borrowing from this same sceptical hand, which, however, is vouched for by Wagnière; as, indeed, La Harpe's more heroical narrative of that occurrence is well known, and hardly differs from the following, except in style:

'On Monday, M. de Voltaire, resolving to enjoy the triumph which had been so long promised him, mounted his carriage, that azure-coloured vehicle, bespangled with gold stars, which a wag called the chariot of the empyrean; and so repaired to the Académie Française, which that day had a special meeting. Twenty-two members were present. None of the prelates, abbés or other ecclesiastics who belong to it, would attend, or take part in these singular deliberations. The sole exceptions were the Abbés de Boismont and Millot; the one a court rake-hell (*roué*), with nothing but the guise of his profession; the other a varlet (*cuistre*), having no favour to look for, either from the Court or the Church.

'The Académie went out to meet M. de Voltaire: he was led to the Director's seat, which that office-bearer and the meeting invited him to accept. His portrait had been hung up above it. The company, without drawing lots, as is the custom, proceeded to work, and named him, by acclamation, Director for the April quarter. The old man, once set a-going, was about to talk a great deal; but they told him, that they valued his health too much to hear him,—that they would reduce him to silence. M. d'Alembert accordingly occupied the session, by reading his *Eloge de Despréaux*, which had already been communicated on a public occasion, and where he had inserted various flattering things for the present visitor.

'M. de Voltaire then signified a wish to visit the Secretary of the Académie, whose apartments are above. With this gentleman he stayed some time; and at last set out for the Comédie Française. The court of the Louvre, vast as it is, was full of people waiting for him. So soon as his notable vehicle came in sight, the cry arose, *Le voilà!* The Savoyards, the apple-women, all the rabble of the quarter had assembled there; and the acclamations, *Vive Voltaire!* resounded as if they would never end. The Marquis de Villette, who had arrived before, came to hand him out of his carriage, where the Procureur Clos was seated beside him: both these gave him their arms, and could scarcely extricate him from the press. On his entering the playhouse, a crowd of more elegance, and seized with true enthusiasm for genius, surrounded him: the ladies, above all, threw themselves in his way, and stopped it, the better to look at him; some were seen squeezing forward to touch his clothes; some plucking hair from his fur. M. le

Duc de Chartres,[14] not caring to advance too near, showed, though at a distance, no less curiosity than others.

'The saint, or rather the god, of the evening, was to occupy the box belonging to the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber,[15] opposite that of the Comte d'Artois. Madame Denis and Madame de Villette were already there; and the pit was in convulsions of joy, awaiting the moment when the poet should appear. There was no end till he placed himself on the front seat, beside the ladies. Then rose a cry: *La Couronne!* and Brizard, the actor, came and put the garland on his head. "Ah, Heaven! will you kill me, then? (*Ah, Dieu! vous voulez donc me faire mourir?*)" cried M. de Voltaire, weeping with joy, and resisting this honour. He took the crown in his hand, and presented it to *Belle-et-Bonne*:[16] she withstood; and the Prince de Beauvau, seizing the laurel, replaced it on the head of our Sophocles, who could refuse no longer.

'The piece (*Irène*) was played, and with more applause than usual, though scarcely with enough to correspond to this triumph of its author. Meanwhile the players were in straits as to what they should do; and during their deliberations the tragedy ended; the curtain fell, and the tumult of the people was extreme, till it rose again, disclosing a show like that of the *Centénaire*. M. de Voltaire's bust, which had been placed shortly before in the *foyer* (greenroom) of the Comédie Française, had been brought upon the stage, and elevated on a pedestal; the whole body of comedians stood round it in a semicircle, with palms and garlands in their hands; there was a crown already on the bust. The pealing of musical flourishes, of drums, of trumpets, had announced the ceremony; and Madame Vestris held in her hand a paper, which was soon understood to contain verses, lately composed by the Marquis de Saint-Marc. She recited them with an emphasis proportioned to the extravagance of the scene. They ran as follows:

Aux yeux de Paris enchanté,
Reçois en ce jour un hommage,
Que confirmera d'âge en âge
La sévère postérité!

Non, tu n'as pas besoin d'atteindre au noir rivage
Pour jouir des honneurs de l'immortalité!

VOLTAIRE, *reçois la couronne*
Que l'on vient de te présenter;
Il est beau de la mériter,
Quand c'est la France qui la donne![17]

[14] Afterwards Egalité.
[15] He himself, as is perhaps too well known, was one.
[16] The Marquise de Villette, a foster-child of his.
[17] As Dryden said of Swift, so may we say: our cousin Saint-Marc has no turn for poetry.

This was encored: the actress recited it again. Next, each of them went forward and laid his garland round the bust. Mademoiselle Fanier, in a fanatical ecstasy, kissed it, and all the others imitated her.

'This long ceremony, accompanied with infinite *vivats*, being over, the curtain again dropped; and when it rose for *Nanine*, one of M. de Voltaire's comedies, his bust was seen on the right-hand side of the stage, where it remained during the whole play.

'M. le Comte d'Artois did not choose to show himself too openly; but being informed, according to his orders, as soon as M. de Voltaire appeared in the theatre, he had gone thither incognito; and it is thought that the old man, once when he went out for a moment, had the honour of a short interview with his Royal Highness.

'*Nanine* finished, comes a new hurlyburly; a new trial for the modesty of our philosopher! He had got into his carriage, but the people would not let him go; they threw themselves on the horses, they kissed them: some young poets even cried out to unyoke these animals, and draw the modern Apollo home with their own arms; unhappily, there were not enthusiasts enough to volunteer this service, and he at last got leave to depart, not without *vivats*, which he may have heard on the Pont-Royal, and even in his own house. . . . . .

'M. de Voltaire, on reaching home, wept anew; and modestly protested that if he had known the people were to play so many follies, he would not have gone.'

On all these wonderful proceedings we shall leave our readers to their own reflections; remarking only, that this happened on the 30th of March (1778), and that on the 30th of May, about the same hour, the object of such extraordinary adulation was in the article of death; the hearse already prepared to receive his remains, for which even a grave had to be stolen. 'He 'expired,' says Wagnière, 'about a quarter past eleven at 'night, with the most perfect tranquillity, after having suf- 'fered the cruelest pains, in consequence of those fatal drugs, 'which his own imprudence, and especially that of the per- 'sons who should have looked to it, made him swallow. Ten 'minutes before his last breath, he took the hand of Morand, 'his valet-de-chambre, who was watching by him; pressed it, 'and said, "*Adieu, mon cher Morand, je me meurs*, Adieu, 'my dear Morand, I am gone." These are the last words uttered by M. de Voltaire.'[18]

[18] On this sickness of Voltaire, and his death-bed deportment, many foolish books have been written; concerning which it is not necessary to say anything. The conduct of the Parisian clergy, on that occasion, seems totally unworthy of their cloth; nor was their reward, so far as concerns these individuals, inappropriate: that of finding themselves once more bilked, once

We have still to consider this man in his specially intellectual capacity; which, as with every man of letters, is to be regarded are the clearest, and to all practical intents, the most important aspect of him. Voltaire's intellectual endowment and acquirement, his talent or genius as a literary man, lies opened to us in a series of Writings, unexampled, as we believe, in two respects,—their extent, and their diversity. Perhaps there is no writer, not a mere compiler, but writing from his own invention or elaboration, who has left so many volumes behind him; and if to the merely arithmetical, we add a critical estimate, the singularity is still greater; for these volumes are not written without an appearance of due care and preparation; perhaps there is not one altogether feeble and confused treatise, nay one feeble and confused sentence, to be found in them. As to variety, again, they range nearly over all human subjects; from Theology down to Domestic Economy; from the Familiar Letter to the

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more *persifles* by that strange old man, in his last decrepitude, who, in his strength, had wrought them and others so many griefs. Surely the parting agonies of a fellow-mortal, when the spirit of our brother, rapt in the whirlwinds and thick ghastly vapours of death, clutches blindly for help, and no help is there, are not the scenes where a wise faith would seek to exult, when it can no longer hope to alleviate! For the rest, to touch farther on those their idle tales of dying horrors, remorse and the like; to write of such, to believe them, or disbelieve them, or in anywise discuss them, were but a continuation of the same ineptitude. He who, after the imperturbable exit of so many Cartouches and Thurtells, in every age of the world, can continue to regard the manner of a man's death as a test of his religious orthodoxy, may boast himself impregnable to merely terrestrial logic. Voltaire had enough of suffering, and of mean enough suffering to encounter, without any addition from theological despair. His last interview with the clergy, who had been sent for by his friends, that the rites of burial might not be denied him, is thus described by Wagnière, as it has been by all other credible reporters of it:

'Two days before that mournful death, M. l'Abbé Mignot, his nephew, 'went to seek the Curé of Saint-Sulpice and the Abbé Gautier, and brought 'them into his uncle's sick-room; who, being informed that the Abbé Gau- 'tier was there, "Ah, well!" said he, "give him my compliments and my 'thanks." The Abbé spoke some words to him, exhorting him to patience. 'The Curé of Saint-Sulpice then came forward, having announced him- 'self, and asked of M. de Voltaire, elevating his voice, if he acknowledged 'the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ? The sick man pushed one of his 'hands against the Curé's *calotte* (coif), shoving him back, and cried, 'turning abruptly to the other side, "Let me die in peace (*Laissez-moi 'mourir en paix*)!" The Curé seemingly considered his person soiled, 'and his coif dishonoured, by the touch of a philosopher. He made the 'sicknurse give him a little brushing, and then went out with the Abbé 'Guatier.' Vol. i. p. 161.

Political History; from the Pasquinade to the Epic Poem. Some strange gift, or union of gifts, must have been at work here; for the result is, at least, in the highest degree uncommon, and to be wondered at, if not to be admired.

If, through all this many-coloured versatility, we try to decipher the essential, distinctive features of Voltaire's intellect, it seems to us that we find there a counterpart to our theory of his moral character; as, indeed, if that theory was accurate, we must do: for the thinking and the moral nature, distinguished by the necessities of speech, have no such distinction in themselves; but, rightly examined, exhibit in every case the strictest sympathy and correspondence, are, indeed, but different phases of the same indissoluble unity,—a living mind. In life, Voltaire was found to be without good claim to the title of philosopher; and now, in literature, and for similar reasons, we find in him the same deficiencies. Here too it is not greatness, but the very extreme of expertness, that we recognise; not strength, so much as agility; not depth, but superficial extent. That truly surprising ability seems rather the unparalleled combination of many common talents, than the exercise of any finer or higher one: for here too the want of earnestness, of intense continuance, is fatal to him. He has the eye of a lynx; sees deeper, at the first glance, than any other man; but no second glance is given. Thus Truth, which to the philosopher, has from of old been said to live in a well, remains for the most part hidden from him; we may say for ever hidden, if we take the highest, and only philosophical species of Truth; for this does not reveal itself to any mortal, without quite another sort of meditation than Voltaire ever seems to have bestowed on it. In fact, his deductions are uniformly of a forensic, argumentative, immediately practical nature; often true, we will admit, so far as they go; but not the whole truth; and false, when taken for the whole. In regard to feeling, it is the same with him: he is, in general, humane, mildly affectionate, not without touches of nobleness; but light, fitful, discontinuous; 'a smart freethinker, all things in an hour.' He is no Poet and Philosopher, but a popular sweet Singer and Haranguer: in all senses, and in all styles, a *Concionator*, which, for the most part, will turn out to be an altogether different character. It is true, in this last province he stands unrivalled; for such an audience, the most fit and perfectly persuasive of all preachers:

but in many far higher provinces, he is neither perfect nor unrivalled ; has been often surpassed ; was surpassed even in his own age and nation. For a decisive, thorough-going, in any measure gigantic force of thought, he is far inferior to Diderot: with all the liveliness he has not the soft elegance, with more than the wit he has but a small portion of the wisdom, that belonged to Fontenelle : as in real sensibility, so in the delineation of it, in pathos, loftiness and earnest eloquence, he cannot, making all fair abatements, and there are many, be compared with Rousseau.

Doubtless, an astonishing fertility, quickness, address ; an openness also, and universal susceptibility of mind, must have belonged to him. As little can we deny that he manifests an assiduous perseverance, a capability of long-continued exertion, strange in so volatile a man ; and consummate skill in husbanding and wisely directing his exertion. The very knowledge he had amassed, granting, which is but partly true, that it was superficial remembered knowledge, might have distinguished him as a mere Dutch commentator. From Newton's *Principia* to the *Shaster* and *Vedam*, nothing has escaped him : he has glanced into all literatures and all sciences ; nay studied in them, for he can speak a rational word on all. It is known, for instance, that he understood Newton when no other man in France understood him : indeed his countrymen may call Voltaire their discoverer of intellectual England ;—a discovery, it is true, rather of the Curtis than of the Columbus sort, yet one which in his day still remained to be made. Nay from all sides he brings new light into his country : now, for the first time, to the upturned wondering eyes of Frenchmen in general, does it become clear that Thought has actually a kind of existence in other kingdoms ; that some glimmerings of civilisation had dawned here and there on the human species, prior to the *Siècle de Louis Quatorze*. Of Voltaire's acquaintance with History, at least with what he called History, be it civil, religious, or literary ; of his innumerable, indescribable collection of facts, gathered from all sources,—from European Chronicles and State Papers, from eastern *Zends* and Jewish *Talmuds*, we need not remind any reader. It has been objected that his information was often borrowed at second-hand ; that he had his plodders and pioneers, whom, as living dictionaries, he skilfully consulted in time of need. This also seems to be partly true, but de-

ducts little from our estimate of him : for the skill *so* to borrow is even rarer than the power to lend. Voltaire's knowledge is not a mere show-room of curiosities, but truly a museum for purposes of teaching ; every object is in its place, and there for its uses : nowhere do we find confusion or vain display ; everywhere intention, instructiveness and the clearest order.

Perhaps it is this very power of Order, of rapid, perspicuous Arrangement, that lies at the root of Voltaire's best gifts ; or rather, we should say, it is that keen, accurate intellectual vision, from which, to a mind of any intensity, Order naturally arises. The clear quick vision, and the methodic arrangement which springs from it, are looked upon as peculiarly French qualities ; and Voltaire, at all times, manifests them in a more than French degree. Let him but cast his eye over any subject, in a moment he sees, though indeed only to a short depth, yet with instinctive decision, where the main bearings of it for that short depth lie ; what is, or appears to be, its logical coherence ; how causes connect themselves with effects ; how the whole is to be seized, and in lucid sequence represented to his own or to other minds. In this respect, moreover, it is happy for him that, below the short depth alluded to, his view does not properly grow dim, but altogether terminates : thus there is nothing farther to occasion him misgivings ; has he not already sounded into that basis of bottomless Darkness on which all things firmly rest ? What lies below is delusion, imagination, some form of Superstition or Folly ; which he, nothing doubting, altogether casts away. Accordingly, he is the most intelligible of writers ; everywhere transparent at a glance. There is no delineation or disquisition of his, that has not its whole purport written on its forehead ; all is precise, all is rightly adjusted ; that keen spirit of Order shows itself in the whole, and in every line of the whole.

If we say that this power of Arrangement, as applied both to the acquisition and to the communication of ideas, is Voltaire's most serviceable faculty in all his enterprises, we say nothing singular : for take the word in its largest acceptation, and it comprehends the whole office of Understanding, logically so called ; is the means whereby man accomplishes whatever, in the way of outward force, has been made possible for him ; conquers all practical obstacles, and rises to be the 'king of this lower world.' It is the organ of all that Knowledge

which can properly be reckoned synonymous with Power; for hereby man strikes with wise aim, into the infinite agencies of Nature, and multiplies his own small strength to unlimited degrees. It has been said also that man may rise to be the 'god of this lower world;' but that is a far loftier height, not attainable by such power-knowledge, but by quite another sort, for which Voltaire in particular shows hardly any aptitude.

In truth, readily as we have recognised his spirit of Method, with its many uses, we are far from ascribing to him any perceptible portion of that greatest praise in thinking, or it writing, the praise of philosophic, still less of poetic Method; which, especially the latter, must be the fruit of deep feeling as well as of clear vision,—of genius as well as talent; and is much more likely to be found in the compositions of a Hooker or a Shakspeare than of a Voltaire. The Method discernible in Voltaire, and this on all subjects whatever, is a purely business Method. The order that arises from it is not Beauty, but, at best, Regularity. His objects do not lie round him in pictorial, not always in scientific grouping; but rather in commodious rows, where each may be seen and come at, like goods in a well-kept warehouse. We might say, there is not the deep natural symmetry of a forest oak, but the simple artificial symmetry of a parlour chandelier. Compare, for example, the plan of the *Henriade* to that of our so barbarous *Hamlet*. The plan of the former is a geometrical diagram by Fermat; that of the latter a cartoon by Raphael. The *Henriade*, as we see it completed, is a polished, square-built Tuileries: *Hamlet* is a mysterious star-paved Valhalla and dwelling of the gods.

Nevertheless, Voltaire's style of Method is, as we have said, a business one; and for his purposes more available than any other. It carries him swiftly through his work, and carries his reader swiftly through it; there is a prompt intelligence between the two; the whole meaning is communicated clearly, and comprehended without effort. From this also it may follow, that Voltaire will please the young more than he does the old; that the first perusal of him will please better than the second, if indeed any second be thought necessary. But what merit (and it is considerable) the pleasure and profit of this first perusal presupposes, must be honestly allowed him. Herein, it seems to us, lies the grand quality in all his performances. These Histories of his, for instance, are felt, in spite of their sparkling

rapidity, and knowing air of philosophic insight, to be among the shallowest of all histories; mere beadrolls of exterior occurrences, of battles, edifices, enactments, and other quite superficial phenomena; yet being clear beadrolls, well adapted for memory, and recited in a lively tone, we listen with satisfaction, and learn somewhat; learn much, if we began knowing nothing. Nay sometimes the summary, in its skilful though crowded arrangement, and brilliant well-defined outlines, has almost a poetical as well as a didactic merit. *Charles the Twelfth* may still pass for a model in that often-attempted species of Biography: the clearest details are given in the fewest words; we have sketches of strange men and strange countries, of wars, adventurers, negotiations, in a style which, for graphic brevity, rivals that of Sallust. It is a line-engraving, on a reduced scale, of that Swede and his mad life; without colours, yet not without the fore-shortenings and perspective observances, nay not altogether without the deeper harmonies, which belong to a true Picture. In respect of composition, whatever may be said of its accuracy or worth otherwise, we cannot but reckon it greatly the best of Voltaire's Histories.

In his other prose works, in his Novels, and innumerable Essays and fugitive pieces, the same clearness of order, the same rapid precision of view, again forms a distinguishing merit. His *Zadigs* and *Baboucs* and *Candides*, which, considered as products of imagination perhaps rank higher with foreigners than any of his professedly poetical performances, are instinct with this sort of intellectual life: the sharpest glances, though from an oblique point of sight, into at least the surface of human life, into the old familiar world of business; which truly, from his oblique station, looks oblique enough, and yields store of ridiculous combinations. The Wit, manifested chiefly in these and the like performances, but ever flowing, unless purposely restrained, in boundless abundance from Voltaire's mind, has been often and duly celebrated. It lay deep-rooted in his nature; the inevitable produce of such an understanding with such a character, and was from the first likely, as it actually proved in the latter period of his life, to become the main dialect in which he spoke and even thought. Doing all justice to the inexhaustible readiness, the quick force, the polished acuteness of Voltaire's Wit, we may remark, at the same time, that it was nowise the highest species of employment for such a

mind as his; that, indeed, it ranks essentially among the lowest species even of Ridicule. It is at all times mere logical pleasantry; a gaiety of the head, not of the heart; there is scarcely a twinkling of Humour in the whole of his numberless sallies. Wit of this sort cannot maintain a demure sedateness; a grave yet infinitely kind aspect, warming the inmost soul with true loving mirth; it has not even the force to laugh outright, but can only sniff and titter. It grounds itself, not on fond sportful sympathy, but on contempt, or at best on indifference. It stands related to Humour as Prose does to Poetry; of which, in this department at least, Voltaire exhibits no symptom. The most determinedly ludicrous composition of his, the *Pucelle*, which cannot, on other grounds, be recommended to any reader, has no higher merit than that of an audacious caricature. True, he is not a buffoon; seldom or never violates the rules, we shall not say of propriety, yet of good breeding: to this negative praise he is entitled. But as for any high claim to positive praise, it cannot be made good. We look in vain, through his whole writings, for one lineament of a *Quixote* or a *Shandy;* even of a *Hudibras* or *Battle of the Books*. Indeed it has been more than once observed, that Humour is not a national gift with the French in late times; that since Montaigne's day it seems to have wellnigh vanished from among them.

Considered in his technical capacity of Poet, Voltaire need not, at present, detain us very long. Here too his excellence is chiefly intellectual, and shown in the way of business-like method. Everything is well calculated for a given end; there is the utmost logical fitness of sentiment, of incident, of general contrivance. Nor is he without an enthusiasm that sometimes resembles inspiration; a clear fellow-feeling for the personages of his scene he always has; with a chameleon susceptibility he takes some hue of every object; if he cannot *be* that object, he at least plausibly enacts it. Thus we have a result everywhere consistent with itself; a contrivance, not without nice adjustments and brilliant aspects, which pleases with that old pleasure of 'difficulties overcome,' and the visible correspondence of means to end. That the deeper portion of our soul sits silent, unmoved under all this; recognising no universal, everlasting Beauty, but only a modish Elegance, less the work of a poetical creation than a process of the toilette, need occasion no surprise. It signifies only that Voltaire was a French poet,

and wrote as the French people of that day required and approved. We have long known that French poetry aimed at a different result from ours; that its splendour was what we should call a dead, artificial one; not the manifold soft summer glories of Nature, but a cold splendour, as of polished metal.

On the whole, in reading Voltaire's poetry, that adventure of the *Café de Procope* should ever be held in mind. He was not without an eye to have looked, had he seen others looking, into the deepest nature of poetry; nor has he failed here and there to cast a glance in that direction: but what preferment could such enterprises earn for him in the *Café de Procope?* What could it profit his all-precious 'fame' to pursue them farther? In the end, he seems to have heartily reconciled himself to use and wont, and striven only to do better what he saw all others doing. Yet his private poetical creed, which could not be a catholic one, was, nevertheless, scarcely so bigoted as might have been looked for. That censure of Shakspeare, which elicited a re-censure in England, perhaps rather deserved a 'recommendatory epistle,' all things being considered. He calls Shakspeare 'a genius full of force and fertility, of nature 'and sublimity,' though unhappily 'without the smallest spark 'of good taste, or the smallest acquaintance with the rules;' which, in Voltaire's dialect, is not so false; Shakspeare having really almost no Parisian *bon goût* whatever, and walking through '*the* rules,' so often as he sees good, with the most astonishing tranquillity. After a fair enough account of *Hamlet*, the best of those '*farces monstrueuses qu'on appelle tragédies*,' where, however, there are 'scenes so beautiful, passages so grand and so terrible,' Voltaire thus proceeds to resolve two great problems:

'The first, how so many wonders could accumulate in a single head; for it must be confessed that all the divine Shakspeare's plays are written in this taste: the second, how men's minds could have been elevated so as to look at these plays with transport; and how they are still followed after, in a century which has produced Addison's *Cato?*

'Our astonishment at the first wonder will cease, when we understand that Shakspeare took all his tragedies from histories or romances; and that in this case he only turned into verse the romance of *Claudius, Gertrude and Hamlet*, written in full by Saxo Grammaticus, to whom be the praise.

'The second part of the problem, that is to say, the pleasure men take in these tragedies, presents a little more difficulty; but here is (*en*

voici) the solution, according to the deep reflections of certain philosophers.

'The English chairmen, the sailors, hackney-coachmen, shop-porters, butchers, clerks even, are passionately fond of shows; give them cock-fights, bull-baitings, fencing-matches, burials, duels, gibbets, witchcraft, apparitions, they run thither in crowds; nay there is more than one patrician as curious as the populace. The citizens of London found, in Shakspeare's tragedies, satisfaction enough for such a turn of mind. The courtiers were obliged to follow the torrent: how can you help admiring what the more sensible part of the town admires? There was nothing better for a hundred and fifty years: the admiration grew with age, and became an idolatry. Some touches of genius, some happy verses full of force and nature, which you remember in spite of yourself, atoned for the remainder, and soon the whole piece succeeded by the help of some beauties of detail.'[19]

Here, truly, is a comfortable little theory, which throws light on more than one thing. However, it is couched in mild terms, comparatively speaking. Frederick the Great, for example, thus gives his verdict:

'To convince yourself of the wretched taste that up to this day prevails in Germany, you have only to visit the public theatres. You will there see, in action, the abominable plays of Shakspeare, translated into our language; and the whole audience fainting with rapture (*se pâmer d'aise*) in listening to those ridiculous farces, worthy of the savages of Canada. I call them such, because they sin against all the rules of the theatre. One may pardon those mad sallies in Shakspeare, for the birth of the arts is never the point of their maturity. But here, even now, we have a *Goetz de Berlichingen*, which has just made its appearance on the scene; a detestable imitation of those miserable English pieces; and the pit applauds, and demands with enthusiasm the repetition of these disgusting ineptitudes (*de ces dégoûtantes platitudes*).'[20]

We have not cited these criticisms with a view to impugn them; but simply to ascertain where the critics themselves are standing. This passage of Frederick's has even a touch of pathos in it; may be regarded as the expiring cry of '*Goût*' in that country, who sees himself suddenly beleagured by strange, appalling Supernatural Influences, which he mistakes for Lapland witchcraft or Cagliostro jugglery; which nevertheless swell up round him, irrepressible, higher, ever higher; and so he drowns, grasping his opera-hat, in an ocean of '*dégoûtantes*

[19] *Œuvres*, t. xlvii. p. 300.

[20] *De la Littérature Allemande;* Berlin, 1780. We quote from the compilation, *Goethe in den Zeugnissen der Mitlebenden*, s. 124.

platitudes.' On the whole, it would appear that Voltaire's view of poetry was radically different from ours; that, in fact, of what we should strictly call poetry, he had almost no view whatever. A Tragedy, a Poem, with him is not to be 'a manifestation of man's Reason in forms suitable to his Sense;' but rather a highly complex egg-dance, to be danced before the King, to a given tune and without breaking a single egg. Nevertheless, let justice be shown to him, and to French poetry at large. This latter is a peculiar growth of our modern ages; has been laboriously cultivated, and is not without its own value. We have to remark also, as a curious fact, that it has been, at one time or other, transplanted into all countries, England, Germany, Spain; but though under the sunbeams of royal protection, it would strike root nowhere. Nay, now it seems falling into the sere and yellow leaf in its own natal soil: the axe has already been seen near its root; and perhaps, in no great lapse of years, this species of poetry may be to the French, what it is to all other nations, a pleasing reminiscence. Yet the elder French loved it with zeal; to them it must have had a true worth: indeed we can understand how, when Life itself consisted so much in display, these representations of Life may have been the only suitable ones. And now, when the nation feels itself called to a more grave and nobler destiny among nations, the want of a new literature also begins to be felt. As yet, in looking at their too purblind, scrambling controversies of *Romanticists* and *Classicists*, we cannot find that our ingenious neighbours have done much more than make a commencement in this enterprise; however, a commencement seems to be made: they are in what may be called the eclectic state; trying all things, German, English, Italian, Spanish, with a candour and real love of improvement, which give the best omens of a still higher success. From the peculiar gifts of the French, and their peculiar spiritual position, we may expect, had they once more attained to an original style, many important benefits, and important accessions to the Literature of the World. Meanwhile, in considering and duly estimating what that people has in past times accomplished, Voltaire must always be reckoned among their most meritorious Poets. Inferior in what we may call general poetic temperament to Racine; greatly inferior, in some points of it, to Corneille, he has an intellectual vivacity, a quickness both

of sight and of invention, which belongs to neither of these two. We believe that, among foreign nations, his Tragedies, such works as *Zaire* and *Mahomet*, are considerably the most esteemed of this school.

However, it is nowise as a Poet, Historian or Novelist, that Voltaire stands so prominent in Europe; but chiefly as a religious Polemic, as a vehement opponent of the Christian Faith. Viewed in this last character, he may give rise to many grave reflections, only a small portion of which can here be so much as glanced at. We may say, in general, that his style of controversy is of a piece with himself; not a higher, and scarcely a lower style than might have been expected from him. As, in a moral point of view, Voltaire nowise wanted a love of truth, yet had withal a still deeper love of his own interest in truth; was, therefore, intrinsically no Philosopher, but a highly accomplished Trivialist; so likewise, in an intellectual point of view, he manifests himself ingenious and adroit, rather than noble or comprehensive; fights for truth or victory, not by patient meditation, but by light sarcasm, whereby victory may indeed, for a time, be gained; but little Truth, what can be named Truth, especially in such matters as this, is to be looked for.

No one, we suppose, ever arrogated for Voltaire any praise of originality in this discussion; we suppose there is not a single idea, of any moment, relating to the Christian Religion, in all his multifarious writings, that had not been set forth again and again before his enterprises commenced. The labours of a very mixed multitude, from Porphyry down to Shaftesbury, including Hobbeses, Tindals, Tolands, some of them sceptics of a much nobler class, had left little room for merit in this kind; nay, Bayle, his own countryman, had just finished a life spent in preaching scepticism precisely similar, and by methods precisely similar, when Voltaire appeared on the arena. Indeed, scepticism, as we have before observed, was at this period universal among the higher ranks in France, with whom Voltaire chiefly associated. It is only in the merit and demerit of grinding down this grain into food for the people, and inducing so many to eat of it, that Voltaire can claim any singularity. However, we quarrel not with him on this head: there may be cases where the want of originality is even a moral merit. But it is a much more serious ground of offence that he intermeddled in Religion, without being himself, in any measure religious;

that he entered the Temple and continued there, with a levity, which, in any Temple where men worship, can beseem no brother man; that, in a word, he ardently, and with long-continued effort, warred against Christianity, without understanding beyond the mere superficies what Christianity was.

His polemical procedure in this matter, it appears to us, must now be admitted to have been, on the whole, a shallow one. Through all its manifold forms, and involutions, and repetitions, it turns, we believe exclusively, on one point: what Theologians have called the 'plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures.' This is the single wall, against which, through long years, and with innumerable battering-rams and catapults and pop-guns, he unweariedly batters. Concede him this, and his ram swings freely to and fro through space: there is nothing farther it can even aim at. That the Sacred Books could be aught else than a Bank-of-Faith Bill, for such and such quantities of Enjoyment, payable at sight in the other world, value received; which bill becomes waste paper, the stamp being questioned:—that the Christian Religion could have any deeper foundation than Books, could possibly be written in the purest nature of man, in mysterious, ineffaceable characters, to which Books, and all Revelations, and authentic traditions, were but a subsidiary matter, were but as the *light* whereby that divine *writing* was to be read;—nothing of this seems to have, even in the faintest manner, occurred to him. Yet herein, as we believe that the whole world has now begun to discover, lies the real essence of the question; by the negative or affirmative decision of which the Christian Religion, anything that is worth calling by that name, must fall, or endure forever. We believe also, that the wiser minds of our age have already come to agreement on this question; or rather never were divided regarding it. Christianity, the 'Worship of Sorrow,' has been recognised as divine, on far other grounds than 'Essays on Miracles,' and by considerations infinitely deeper than would avail in any mere 'trial by jury.' He who argues against it, or for it, in this manner, may be regarded as mistaking its nature: the Ithuriel, though to our eyes he wears a body and the fashion of armour, cannot be wounded with material steel. Our fathers were wiser than we, when they said in deepest earnestness, what we often hear in shallow mockery, that Religion is 'not of Sense, but of Faith;' not of Understanding,

but of Reason. He who finds himself without the latter, who by all his studying has failed to unfold it in himself, may have studied to great or to small purpose, we say not which; but of the Christian Religion, as of many other things, he has and can have no knowledge.

The Christian Doctrine we often hear likened to the Greek Philosophy, and found, on all hands, some measurable way superior to it: but this also seems a mistake. The Christian Doctrine, that Doctrine of Humility, in all senses godlike and the parent of all godlike virtues, is not superior, or inferior, or equal, to any doctrine of Socrates or Thales; being of a totally different nature; differing from these, as a perfect Ideal Poem does from a correct Computation in Arithmetic. He who compares it with such standards may lament that, beyond the mere letter, the purport of this divine Humility has never been disclosed to him; that the loftiest feeling hitherto vouchsafed to mankind is as yet hidden from his eyes.

For the rest, the question how Christianity originated is doubtless a high question; resolvable enough, if we view only its surface, which was all that Voltaire saw of it; involved in sacred, silent, unfathomable depths, if we investigate its interior meanings; which meanings, indeed, it may be, every new age will develop to itself in a new manner and with new degrees of light; for the whole truth may be called infinite, and to man's eye discernible only in parts; but the question itself is nowise the ultimate one in this matter.

We understand ourselves to be risking no new assertion, but simply reporting what is already the conviction of the greatest of our age, when we say,—that cheerfully recognising gratefully appropriating whatever Voltaire has proved, or any other man has proved, or shall prove, the Christian Religion, once here, cannot again pass away; that in one or the other form, it will endure through all time; that as in Scripture, so also in the heart of man, is written, 'the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.' Were the memory of this Faith never so obscured, as, indeed, in all times, the coarse passions and perceptions of the world do all but obliterate it in the hearts of most; yet in every pure soul, in every Poet and Wise Man, it finds a new Missionary, a new Martyr, till the great volume of Universal History is finally closed, and man's destinies are fulfilled in this earth. 'It is a height to which the human

'species were fated and enabled to attain; and from which, 'having once attained it, they can never retrograde.'

These things, which it were far out of our place to attempt adequately elucidating here, must not be left out of sight in appreciating Voltaire's polemical worth. We find no trace of these, or of any the like essential considerations having been present with him, in examining the Christian Religion; nor indeed was it consistent with his general habits that they should be so. Totally destitute of religious Reverence, even of common practical seriousness; by nature or habit, undevout both in heart and head; not only without any Belief, in other than a material sense, but without the possibility of acquiring any, he can be no safe or permanently useful guide in this investigation. We may consider him as having opened the way to future inquirers of a truer spirit; but for his own part, as having engaged in an enterprise, the real nature of which was wellnigh unknown to him; and engaged in it with the issue to be anticipated in such a case; producing chiefly confusion, dislocation, destruction, on all hands; so that the good he achieved is still, in these times, found mixed with an alarming proportion of evil, from which, indeed, men rationally doubt whether much of it will in any time be separable.

We should err widely too, if, in estimating what quantity, altogether overlooking what quality, of intellect Voltaire may have manifested on this occasion, we took the result produced as any measure of the force applied. His task was not one of Affirmation, but of Denial; not a task of erecting and rearing up, which is slow and laborious; but of destroying and overturning, which in most cases is rapid and far easier. The force necessary for him was nowise a great and noble one; but a small, in some respects a mean one; to be nimbly and seasonably put in use. The Ephesian Temple, which it had employed many wise heads and strong arms for a lifetime to build, could be *un*built by one madman, in a single hour.

Of such errors, deficiencies and positive misdeeds, it appears to us a just criticism must accuse Voltaire: at the same time, we can nowise join in the condemnatory clamour which so many worthy persons, not without the best intentions, to this day keep up against him. His whole character seems to be plain enough, common enough, had not extraneous influences so perverted our views regarding it: nor, morally speaking, is

it a worse character, but considerably a better one, than belongs to the mass of men. Voltaire's aims in opposing the Christian Religion were unhappily of a mixed nature; yet, after all, very nearly such aims as we have often seen directed against it, and often seen directed in its favour: a little love of finding Truth, with a great love of making Proselytes; which last is in itself a natural, universal feeling; and if honest, is, even in the worst cases, a subject for pity, rather than for hatred. As a light, careless, courteous Man of the World, he offers no hateful aspect; on the contrary, a kindly, gay, rather amiable one: hundreds of men, with half his worth of disposition, die daily, and their little world laments them. It is time that he too should be judged of by his intrinsic, not by his accidental qualities; that justice should be done to him also; for injustice can profit no man and no cause.

In fact, Voltaire's chief merits belong to Nature and himself; his chief faults are of his time and country. In that famous era of the Pompadours and *Encyclopédies*, he forms the main figure; and was such, we have seen, more by resembling the multitude, than by differing from them. It was a strange age, that of Louis XV.; in several points, a novel one in the history of mankind. In regard to its luxury and depravity, to the high culture of all merely practical and material faculties, and the entire torpor of all the purely contemplative and spiritual, this era considerably resembles that of the Roman Emperors. There too was external splendour and internal squalor; the highest completeness in all sensual arts, including among these not cookery and its adjuncts alone, but even 'effect-painting' and 'effect-writing;' only the art of virtuous living was a lost one. Instead of Love for Poetry, there was 'Taste' for it; refinement in manners, with utmost coarseness in morals: in a word, the strange spectacle of a Social System, embracing large, cultivated portions of the human species, and founded only on Atheism. With the Romans, things went what we should call their natural course: Liberty, public spirit quietly declined into *caput-mortuum;* Self-love, Materialism, Baseness even to the disbelief in all possibility of Virtue, stalked more and more imperiously abroad; till the body-politic, long since deprived of its vital circulating fluids, had now become a putrid carcass, and fell in pieces to be the prey of ravenous wolves. Then was there, under these Attilas and Alarics, a world-spec-

tacle of destruction and despair, compared with which the often-commemorated 'horrors of the French Revolution,' and all Napoleon's wars, were but the gay jousting of a tournament to the sack of stormed cities. Our European community has escaped the like dire consummation; and by causes which, as may be hoped, will always secure it from such. Nay, were there no other cause, it may be asserted, that in a commonwealth where the Christian Religion exists, where it once has existed, public and private Virtue, the basis of all Strength, never can become extinct; but in every new age, and even from the deepest decline, there is a chance, and in the course of ages a certainty of renovation.

That the Christian Religion, or any Religion, continued to exist; that some martyr heroism still lived in the heart of Europe to rise against mailed Tyranny when it rode triumphant,—was indeed no merit in the age of Louis XV., but a happy accident which it could not altogether get rid of. For that age too is to be regarded as an experiment, on the great scale, to decide the question, not yet, it would appear, settled to universal satisfaction: With what degree of vigour a political system, grounded on pure Self-interest, never so enlightened, but without a God or any recognition of the godlike in man, can be expected to flourish; or whether, in such circumstances, a political system can be expected to flourish, or even to subsist at all? It is contended by many that our mere love of personal Pleasure, or Happiness as it is called, acting on every individual, with such clearness as he may easily have, will of itself lead him to respect the rights of others, and wisely employ his own; to fulfil, on a mere principle of economy, all the duties of a good patriot; so that, in what respects the State, or the mere social existence of mankind, Belief, beyond the testimony of the senses, and Virtue, beyond the very common Virtue of loving what is pleasant and hating what is painful, are to be considered as supererogatory qualifications, as ornamental, not essential. Many there are, on the other hand, who pause over this doctrine; cannot discover, in such a universe of conflicting atoms, any principle by which the whole shall cohere; for if every man's selfishness, infinitely-expansive, is to be hemmed-in only by the infinitely-expansive selfishness of every other man, it seems as if we should have a world of mutually-repulsive bodies with no centripetal force to bind them together;

in which case, it is well known, they would, by and by, diffuse themselves over space, and constitute a remarkable Chaos, but no habitable Solar or Stellar System.

If the age of Louis XV. was not made an *experimentum crusis* in regard to this question, one reason may be, that such experiments are too expensive. Nature cannot afford, above once or twice in the thousand years, to destroy a whole world for purposes of science; but must content herself with destroying one or two kingdoms. The age of Louis XV., so far as it went, seems a highly illustrative experiment. We are to remark also, that its operation was clogged by a very considerable disturbing force; by a large remnant, namely, of the old faith in Religion, in the invisible, celestial nature of Virtue, which our French Purifiers, by their utmost efforts of lavation, had not been able to wash away. The men did their best, but no man can do more. Their worst enemy, we imagine, will not accuse them of any undue regard to things unseen and spiritual: far from practising this invisible sort of Virtue, they cannot even believe in its possibility. The high exploits and endurances of old ages were no longer virtues, but 'passions;' these antique persons had a taste for being heroes, a certain fancy to die for the truth: the more fools they! With our *Philosophes*, the only virtue of any civilisation was what they call 'Honour,' the sanctioning deity of which is that wonderful 'Force of Public Opinion.' Concerning which virtue of Honour, we must be permitted to say, that she reveals herself too clearly as the daughter and heiress of our old acquaintance Vanity, who indeed has been known enough ever since the foundation of the world, at least since the date of that 'Lucifer, son of the Morning;' but known chiefly in her proper character of strolling actress, or cast-clothes Abigail; and never, till that new era, had seen her issue set up as Queen and all-sufficient Dictatress of man's whole soul, prescribing with nicest precision what, in all practical and all moral emergencies, he was to do and to forbear. Again, with regard to this same Force of Public Opinion, it is a force well known to all of us; respected, valued as of indispensable utility, but nowise recognised as a final or divine force. We might ask, What divine, what truly great thing had ever been effected by this force? Was it the Force of Public Opinion that drove Columbus to America; John Kepler, not to fare sumptuously among Rodolph's Astrologers

and Fire-eaters, but to perish of want, discovering the true System of the Stars? Still more ineffectual do we find it as a basis of public or private Morals. Nay, taken by itself, it may be called a baseless basis: for without some ulterior sanction, common to all minds; without some belief in the necessary, eternal, or which is the same, in the supramundane, divine nature of Virtue, existing in each individual, what could the moral judgment of a thousand or a thousand-thousand individuals avail us? Without some celestial guidance, whencesoever derived, or howsoever named, it appears to us the Force of Public Opinion would, by and by, become an extremely unprofitable one. "Enlighten Self-interest!" cries the *Philosophe;* "do but sufficiently enlighten it!" We ourselves have seen enlightened Self-interests, ere now; and truly, for most part, their light was only as that of a horn-lantern, sufficient to guide the bearer himself out of various puddles; but to us and the world of comparatively small advantage. And figure the human species, like an endless host, seeking its way onwards through undiscovered Time, in black darkness, save that each had his horn-lantern, and the vanguard some few of glass!

However, we will not dwell on controversial niceties. What we had to remark was, that this era, called of Philosophy, was in itself but a poor era; that any little morality it had was chiefly borrowed, and from those very ages which it accounted so barbarous. For this 'Honour,' this 'Force of Public Opinion,' is not asserted, on any side, to have much renovating, but only a sustaining or preventive power; it cannot create new Virtue, but at best may preserve what is already there. Nay, of the age of Louis XV. we may say that its very Power, its material strength, its knowledge, all that it had, was borrowed. It boasted itself to be an age of illumination; and truly illumination there was, of its kind: only, except the illuminated windows, almost nothing to be *seen* thereby. None of those great Doctrines or Institutions that have 'made man in all points a man;' none even of those Discoveries that have the most subjected external Nature to his purposes, were made in that age. What Plough or Printing-press, what Chivalry or Christianity, nay what Steam-engine, or Quakerism, or Trial by Jury, did these Encyclopedists invent for mankind? They invented simply nothing: not one of man's virtues, not one of man's powers, is due to them; in all these respects the age of

Louis XV. is among the most barren of recorded ages. Indeed, the whole trade of our *Philosophes* was directly the opposite of invention: it was not to produce, that they stood there; but to criticise, to quarrel with, to rend in pieces, what had been already produced;—a quite inferior trade: sometimes a useful, but on the whole a mean trade: often the fruit, and always the parent, of meanness, in every mind that permanently follows it.

Considering the then position of affairs, it is not singular that the age of Louis XV. should have been what it was: an age without nobleness, without high virtue or high manifestations of talent; an age of shallow clearness, of polish, self-conceit, scepticism and all forms of *Persiflage*. As little does it seem surprising, or peculiarly blamable, that Voltaire, the leading man of that age, should have partaken largely of all its qualities. True, his giddy activity took serious effect; the light firebrands, which he so carelessly scattered abroad, kindled fearful conflagrations: but in these there has been good as well as evil; nor is it just that, even for the latter, he, a limited mortal, should be charged with more than mortal's responsibility. After all, that parched, blighted period, and the period of earthquakes and tornadoes which followed it, have now wellnigh cleared away: they belong to the Past, and for us, and those that come after us, are not without their benefits, and calm historical meaning.

'The thinking heads of all nations,' says a deep observer, 'had in secret come to majority; and in a mistaken feeling of their vocation, rose the more fiercely against antiquated constraint. The Man of Letters is, by instinct, opposed to a Priesthood of old standing: the literary class and the clerical must wage a war of extermination, when they are divided; for both strive after one place. Such division became more and more perceptible, the nearer we approached the period of European manhood, the epoch of triumphant Learning; and Knowledge and Faith came into more decided contradiction. In the prevailing Faith, as was thought, lay the reason of the universal degradation; and by a more and more searching Knowledge men hoped to remove it. On all hands, the Religious feeling suffered, under manifold attacks against its actual manner of existence, against the forms in which hitherto it had embodied itself. The result of that modern way of Thought was named Philosophy; and in this all was included that opposed itself to the ancient way of thought, especially, therefore, all that opposed itself to Religion. The original personal hatred against the Catholic Faith passed, by degrees, into hatred against the Bible, against the Christian Religion, and at last against Re-

ligion altogether. Nay more, this hatred of Religion naturally extended itself over all objects of enthusiasm in general; proscribed Fancy and Feeling, Morality and love of Art, the Future and the Antique; placed man, with an effort, foremost in the series of natural productions; and changed the infinite, creative music of the Universe into the monotonous clatter of a boundless Mill, which, turned by the stream of Chance, and swimming thereon, was a Mill of itself, without Architect and Miller, properly a genuine *perpetuum mobile*, a real self-grinding Mill.

'One enthusiasm was generously left to poor mankind, and rendered indispensable as a touchstone of the highest culture, for all jobbers in the same: Enthusiasm for this magnanimous Philosophy, and above all, for these its priests and mystagogues. France was so happy as to be the birthplace and dwelling of this new Faith, which had thus, from patches of pure knowledge, been pasted together. Low as Poetry ranked in this new Church, there were some poets among them, who, for effect's sake, made use of the old ornaments and old lights; but in so doing, ran a risk of kindling the new world-system by ancient fire. More cunning brethren, however, were at hand to help; and always in season poured cold water on the warming audience. The members of this Church were restlessly employed in clearing Nature, the Earth, the Souls of men, the Sciences, from all Poetry; obliterating every vestige of the Holy; disturbing, by sarcasms, the memory of all lofty occurrences and lofty men; disrobing the world of all its variegated vesture. * * * Pity that Nature continued so wondrous and incomprehensible, so poetical and infinite, all efforts to modernise her notwithstanding! However, if anywhere an old superstition, of a higher world and the like, came to light, instantly, on all hands, was a springing of rattles; that, if possible, the dangerous spark might be extinguished, by appliances of philosophy and wit: yet Tolerance was the watchword of the cultivated; and in France, above all, synonymous with Philosophy. Highly remarkable is this history of modern Unbelief; the key to all the vast phenomena of recent times. Not till last century, till the latter half of it, does the novelty begin; and in a little while it expands to an immeasurable bulk and variety: a second Reformation, a more comprehensive, and more specific, was unavoidable; and naturally it first visited that land which was the most modernised, and had the longest lain in an asthenic state, from want of freedom. * * *

'At the present epoch, however, we stand high enough to look back with a friendly smile on those bygone days; and even in those marvellous follies to discern curious crystallisations of historical matter. Thankfully will we stretch out our hands to those Men of Letters and *Philosophes:* for this delusion too required to be exhausted, and the scientific side of things to have full value given it. More beauteous and many-coloured stands Poesy, like a leafy India, when contrasted with the cold, dead Spitzbergen of that Closet-Logic. That in the middle of the globe, an India, so warm and lordly, might exist, must also a cold motionless sea, dead cliffs, mist instead of the starry sky, and a long night, make

both Poles uninhabitable. The deep meaning of the laws of Mechanism lay heavy on those anchorites in the deserts of understanding: the charm of the first glimpse into it overpowered them: the Old avenged itself on them; to the first feeling of self-consciousness, they sacrificed, with wondrous devotedness, what was holiest and fairest in the world; and were the first that, in practice, again recognised and preached forth the sacredness of Nature, the infinitude of Art, the independence of Knowledge, the worth of the Practical, and the all-presence of the Spirit of History; and so doing, put an end to a Spectre-dynasty, more potent, universal and terrific than perhaps they themselves were aware of."[21]

How far our readers will accompany Novalis in such high-soaring speculation, is not for us to say. Meanwhile, that the better part of them have already, in their own dialect, united with him, and with us, in candid tolerance, in clear acknowledgment, towards French Philosophy, towards this Voltaire and the spiritual period which bears his name, we do not hesitate to believe. Intolerance, animosity can forward no cause; and least of all beseems the cause of moral and religious truth. A wise man has well reminded us, that 'in any controversy, 'the instant we feel angry, we have already ceased striving 'for Truth, and begun striving for Ourselves.' Let no man doubt but Voltaire and his disciples, like all men and all things that live and act in God's world, will one day be found to have 'worked together for good.' Nay that, with all his evil, he has already accomplished good, must be admitted in the soberest calculation. How much do we include in this little word: He gave the death-stab to modern Superstition! *That* horrid incubus, which dwelt in darkness, shunning the light, is passing away; with all its racks, and poison-chalices, and foul sleeping-draughts, is passing away without return. It was a most weighty service. Does not the cry of "No Popery," and some vague terror or sham-terror of 'Smithfield fires,' still act on certain minds in these very days? He who sees even a little way into the signs of the times, sees well that both the Smithfield fires, and the Edinburgh thumb-screws (for these too must be held in remembrance) are things which have long, very long, lain behind us; divided from us by a wall of Centuries, transparent indeed, but more impassable than adamant. For, as we said, Superstition is in its death-lair: the last agonies may endure for decades, or for centuries; but it carries the iron in its heart, and will not vex the earth any more.

[21] *Novalis Schriften*, i. s. 198.

That, with Superstition, Religion is also passing away, seems to us a still more ungrounded fear. Religion cannot pass away. The burning of a little straw may hide the stars of the sky; but the stars are there, and will reappear. On the whole, we must repeat the often-repeated saying, that it is unworthy a religious man to view an irreligious one either with alarm or aversion; or with any other feeling than regret, and hope, and brotherly commiseration. If he seek Truth, is he not our brother, and to be pitied? If he do not seek Truth, is he not still our brother, and to be pitied still more? Old Ludovicus Vives has a story of a clown that killed his ass because it had drunk up the moon, and he thought the world could ill spare that luminary. So he killed his ass, *ut lunam redderet.* The clown was well-intentioned, but unwise. Let us not imitate him: let us not slay a faithful servant, who has carried us far. He has not drunk the moon; but only the *reflection* of the moon, in his own poor water-pail, where too, it may be, he was drinking with purposes the most harmless.

NOVALIS.[1]

[1829.]

A NUMBER of years ago, Jean Paul's copy of *Novalis* led him to infer that the German reading-world was of a quick disposition; inasmuch as, with respect to books that required more than one perusal, it declined perusing them at all. Paul's *Novalis*, we suppose, was of the first Edition, uncut, dusty, and lent him from the Public Library with willingness, nay with joy. But times, it would appear, must be considerably changed since then; indeed, were we to judge of German reading habits from these Volumes of ours, we should draw quite a different conclusion to Paul's; for they are of the fourth Edition, perhaps therefore the ten-thousandth copy, and that of a Book demanding, whether deserving or not, to be oftener read than almost any other it has ever been our lot to examine.

Without at all entering into the merits of Novalis, we may observe that we should reckon it a happy sign of Literature, were so solid a fashion of study here and there established in all countries: for directly in the teeth of most 'intellectual tea-circles,' it may be asserted that no good Book, or good thing of any sort, shows its best face at first; nay that the commonest quality in a true work of Art, if its excellence have any depth and compass, is that at first sight it occasions a certain disappointment; perhaps even, mingled with its undeniable beauty, a certain feeling of aversion. Not as if we meant, by this remark, to cast a stone at the old guild of literary Improvisators, or any of that diligent brotherhood, whose trade it is to blow soap-bubbles for their fellow-creatures; which bubbles, of course, if they are not seen and admired this moment, will be altogether lost to men's eyes the next. Considering the use of these blowers, in civilised communities, we rather

1 FOREIGN REVIEW, No. 7.—*Novalis Schriften. Herausgegeben von Ludwig Tieck und Friedrich Schlegel* (Novalis' Writings. Edited by Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel). Fourth Edition. 2 vols. Berlin, 1826.

wish them strong lungs, and all manner of prosperity: but simply we would contend that such soap-bubble guild should not become the sole one in Literature; that being undisputably the strongest, it should content itself with this preëminence, and not tyrannically annihilate its less prosperous neighbours. For it should be recollected that Literature positively has other aims than this of amusement from hour to hour; nay perhaps that this, glorious as it may be, is not its highest or true aim. We do say, therefore, that the Improvisator corporation should be kept within limits; and readers, at least a certain small class of readers, should understand that some few departments of human inquiry have still their depths and difficulties; that the abstruse is not precisely synonymous with the absurd; nay that light itself may be darkness, in a certain state of the eye-sight; that, in short, cases may occur when a little patience and some attempt at thought would not be altogether superfluous in reading. Let the mob of gentlemen keep their own ground, and be happy and applauded there: if they overstep that ground, they indeed may flourish the better for it, but the reader will suffer damage. For in this way, a reader, accustomed to see through everthing in one second of time, comes to forget that his wisdom and critical penetration are finite and not infinite; and so commits more than one mistake in his conclusions. The Reviewer too, who indeed is only a preparatory reader, as it were a sort of sieve and drainer for the use of more luxurious readers, soon follows his example: these two react still farther on the mob of gentlemen; and so among them all, with this action and reaction, matters grow worse and worse.

It rather seems to us as if, in this respect of faithfulness in reading, the Germans were somewhat ahead of us English; at least we have no such proof to show of it as that fourth Edition of *Novalis*. Our Coleridge's *Friend*, for example, and *Biographia Literaria* are but a slight business compared with these *Schriften;* little more than the Alphabet, and that in gilt letters, of such Philosophy and Art as is here taught in the form of Grammar and Rhetorical Compend; yet Coleridge's works were triumphantly condemned by the whole reviewing world, as clearly unintelligible; and among readers they have still but an unseen circulation; like living brooks, hidden for the present under mountains of froth and theatrical snow-paper,

and which only at a distant day, when these mountains shall have decomposed themselves into gas and earthy residuum, may roll forth in their true limpid shape, to gladden the general eye with what beauty and everlasting freshness does reside in them. It is admitted too, on all hands, that Mr. Coleridge is a man of 'genius,' that is, a man having more intellectual insight than other men; and strangely enough, it is taken for granted, at the same time, that he has less intellectual insight than any other. For why else are his doctrines to be thrown out of doors, without examination, as false and worthless, simply because they are obscure? Or how is their so palpable falsehood to be accounted for to our minds, except on this extraordinary ground: that a man able to originate deep thoughts (such is the meaning of genius) is unable to *see* them when originated; that the creative intellect of a Philosopher is destitute of that mere faculty of logic which belongs to 'all Attorneys, and men educated in Edinburgh'? The Cambridge carrier, when asked whether his horse could "draw inferences," readily replied, "Yes, anything in reason;" but here, it seems, is a man of genius who has no similar gift.

We ourselves, we confess, are too young in the study of human nature to have met with any such anomaly. Never yet has it been our fortune to fall in with any man of genius whose conclusions did not correspond better with his premises, and not worse, than those of other men; whose genius, when it once came to be understood, did not manifest itself in a deeper, fuller, truer view of all things human and divine, than the clearest of your so laudable 'practical men' had claim to. Such, we say, has been our uniform experience; so uniform, that we now hardly ever expect to see it contradicted. True it is, the old Pythagorean argument of 'the master said it,' has long since ceased to be available: in these days, no man, except the Pope of Rome, is altogether exempt from error of judgment; doubtless a man of genius may chance to adopt false opinions; nay rather, like all other sons of Adam, except that same enviable Pope, *must* occasionally adopt such. Nevertheless, we reckon it a good maxim, That no error is fully confuted till we have seen not only *that* it is an error, but how it became one; till finding that it clashes with the principles of truth established in our own mind, we find also in what way it had seemed to harmonise with the principles of truth established

in that other mind, perhaps so unspeakably superior to ours. Treated by this method, it still appears to us, according to the old saying, that the errors of a wise man are literally more instructive than the truths of a fool. For the wise man travels in lofty, far-seeing regions; the fool, in low-lying, high-fenced lanes: retracing the footsteps of the former, to discover where he deviated, whole provinces of the Universe are laid open to us; in the path of the latter, granting even that he have not deviated at all, little is laid open to us but two wheel-ruts and two hedges.

On these grounds we reckon it more profitable, in almost any case, to have to do with men of depth than with men of shallowness: and were it possible, we would read no book that was not written by one of the former class; all members of which we would love and venerate, how perverse soever they might seem to us at first; nay though, after the fullest investigation, we still found many things to pardon in them. Such of our readers as at all participate in this predilection will not blame us for bringing them acquainted with Novalis, a man of the most indisputable talent, poetical and philosophical; whose opinions, extraordinary, nay altogether wild and baseless as they often appear, are not without a strict coherence in his own mind, and will lead any other mind, that examines them faithfully, into endless considerations; opening the strangest inquiries, new truths, or new possibilities of truth, a whole unexpected world of thought, where, whether for belief or denial, the deepest questions await us.

In what is called reviewing such a book as this, we are aware that to the judicious craftsman two methods present themselves. The first and most convenient is, for the Reviewer to perch himself resolutely, as it were, on the shoulder of his Author, and therefrom to show as if he commanded him and looked down on him by natural superiority of stature. Whatsoever the great man says or does, the little man shall treat with an air of knowingness and light condescending mockery; professing, with much covert sarcasm, that this and that other is beyond *his* comprehension, and cunningly asking his readers if they comprehend it! Herein it will help him mightily, if, besides description, he can quote a few passages, which, in their detached state, and taken most probably in quite a wrong acceptation of the words, shall sound strange, and, to certain hearers, even

absurd; all which will be easy enough, if he have any handiness in the business, and address the right audience; truths, as this world goes, being true only for those that have *some* understanding of them; as, for instance, in the Yorkshire Wolds, and Thames Coal-ships, Christian men enough might be found, at this day, who, if you read them the Thirty-ninth of the *Principia*, would 'grin intelligence from ear to ear.' On the other hand, should our Reviewer meet with any passage, the wisdom of which, deep, plain and palpable to the simplest, might cause misgivings in the reader, as if here were a man of half-unknown endowment, whom perhaps it were better to wonder at than laugh at, our Reviewer either suppresses it, or citing it with an air of meritorious candour, calls upon his Author, in a tone of command and encouragement, to lay aside his transcendental crotchets, and write always thus, and *he* will admire him. Whereby the reader again feels comforted; proceeds swimmingly to the conclusion of the 'Article,' and shuts it with a victorious feeling, not only that he and the Reviewer understand this man, but also that, with some rays of fancy and the like, the man is little better than a living mass of darkness.

In this way does the small Reviewer triumph over great Authors; but it is the triumph of a fool. In this way too does he recommend himself to certain readers, but it is the recommendation of a parasite, and of no true servant. The servant would have spoken truth, in this case; truth, that it might have profited, however harsh: the parasite glozes his master with sweet speeches, that he may filch applause, and certain 'guineas per shet,' from him; substituting for ignorance which was harmless, error which is not so. And yet to the vulgar reader, naturally enough, that flattering unction is full of solacement. In fact, to a reader of this sort few things can be more alarming than to find that his own little Parish, where he lived so snug and absolute, is, after all, *not* the whole Universe; that beyond the hill which screened his house from the east wind, and grew his kitchen-vegetables so sweetly, there are other hills and other hamlets, nay mountains and towered cities; with all which, if he would continue to pass for a geographer, he must forthwith make himself acquainted. Now this Reviewer, often his fellow Parishioner, is a safe man; leads him pleasantly to the hill-top; shows him that indeed there are, or seem to be, other expanses, these too of boundless extent: but with only

cloud mountains, and *fatamorgana* cities; the true character of that region being Vacuity, or at best a stony desert tenanted by Gryphons and Chimeras.

Surely, if printing is not, like courtier speech, 'the art of *concealing* thought,' all this must be blamable enough. Is it the Reviewer's real trade to be a pander of laziness, self-conceit and all manner of contemptuous stupidity on the part of his reader; carefully ministering to these propensities; carefully fencing-off whatever might invade that fool's-paradise with news of disturbance? Is he the priest of Literature and Philosophy, to interpret their mysteries to the common man; as a faithful preacher, teaching him to understand what is adapted for his understanding, to reverence what is adapted for higher understandings than his? Or merely the lackey of Dulness, striving for certain wages, of pudding or praise, by the month or quarter, to perpetuate the reign of presumption and triviality on earth? If the latter, will he not be counselled to pause for an instant, and reflect seriously, whether starvation were worse or were better than such a dog's-existence?

Our reader perceives that we are for adopting the second method with regard to Novalis; that we wish less to insult over this highly-gifted man, than to gain some insight into him; that we look upon his mode of being and thinking as very singular, but not therefore necessarily very contemptible; as a matter, in fact, worthy of examination, and difficult beyond most others to examine wisely and with profit. Let no man expect that, in this case, a Samson is to be led forth, blinded and manacled, to make him sport. Nay, might it not, in a spiritual sense, be death, as surely it would be damage, to the small man himself? For is not this habit of sneering at all greatness, of forcibly bringing down all greatness to his own height, one chief cause which keeps that height so very inconsiderable? Come of it what may, we have no refreshing dew for the small man's vanity in this place; nay rather, as charitable brethren, and fellow-sufferers from that same evil, we would gladly lay the sickle to that reed-grove of self-conceit, which has grown round him, and reap it altogether away, that so the true figure of the world, and his own true figure, might no longer be utterly hidden from him. Does this our brother, then, refuse to accompany us, without such allurements? He must even retain our best wishes, and abide by his own hearth.

Farther, to the honest few who still go along with us on this occasion, we are bound in justice to say that, far from looking down on Novalis, we cannot place either them or ourselves on a level with him. To explain so strange an individuality, to exhibit a mind of this depth and singularity before the minds of readers so foreign to him in every sense, would be a vain pretension in us. With the best will, and after repeated trials, we have gained but a feeble notion of Novalis for ourselves: his Volumes come before us with every disadvantage; they are the posthumous works of a man cut off in early life, while his opinions, far from being matured for the public eye, were still lying crude and disjointed before his own; for most part written down in the shape of detached aphorisms, 'none of them,' as he says himself, 'untrue or unimportant to his own mind,' but naturally requiring to be remodelled, expanded, compressed, as the matter cleared up more and more into logical unity; at best but fragments of a great scheme which he did not live to realise. If his Editors, Friedrich Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck, declined commenting on these Writings, we may well be excused for declining to do so. 'It cannot be our purpose here,' says Tieck, 'to recommend the following Works, or to judge them; pro-'bable as it must be that any judgment delivered at this stage 'of the matter would be a premature and unripe one: for a 'spirit of such originality must first be comprehended, his will 'understood, and his loving intention felt and replied to; so 'that not till his ideas have taken root in other minds, and 'brought forth new ideas, shall we see rightly, from the his-'torical sequence, what place he himself occupied, and what 'relation to his country he truly bore.'

Meanwhile, Novalis is a figure of such importance in German Literature, that no student of it can pass him by without attention. If we must not attempt interpreting this Work for our readers, we are bound at least to point out its existence, and according to our best knowledge direct such of them as take an interest in the matter how to investigate it farther for their own benefit. For this purpose, it may be well that we leave our Author to speak chiefly for himself; subjoining only such expositions as cannot be dispensed with for even verbal intelligibility, and as we can offer on our own surety with some degree of confidence. By way of basis to the whole inquiry, we prefix some particulars of his short life; a part of our task

which Tieck's clear and graceful Narrative, given as 'Preface to the Third Edition,' renders easy for us.

Friedrich von Hardenberg, better known in Literature by the pseudonym 'Novalis,' was born on the 2d of May 1772, at a country residence of his family in the Grafschaft of Mansfeld, in Saxony. His father, who had been a soldier in youth, and still retained a liking for that profession, was at this time Director of the Saxon Salt-works; an office of some considerable trust and dignity. Tieck says, 'he was a vigorous, unweariedly 'active man, of open, resolute character, a true German. His 'religious feelings made him a member of the Herrnhut Com-'munion; yet his disposition continued gay, frank, rugged 'and downright.' The mother also was distinguished for her worth; 'a pattern of noble piety and Christian mildness;' virtues which her subsequent life gave opportunity enough for exercising.

On the young Friedrich, whom we may continue to call Novalis, the qualities of his parents must have exercised more than usual influence; for he was brought up in the most retired manner, with scarcely any associate but a sister one year older than himself, and the two brothers that were next to him in age. A decidedly religious temper seems to have infused itself, under many benignant aspects, over the whole family: in Novalis especially it continued the ruling principle through life; manifested no less in his scientific speculations than in his feelings and conduct. In childhood he is said to have been remarkable chiefly for the entire, enthusiastic affection with which he loved his mother; and for a certain still, secluded disposition, such that he took no pleasure in boyish sports, and rather shunned the society of other children. Tieck mentions that, till his ninth year, he was reckoned nowise quick of apprehension; but at this period, strangely enough, some violent biliary disease, which had almost cut him off, seemed to awaken his faculties into proper life, and he became the readiest, eagerest learner in all branches of his scholarship.

In his eighteenth year, after a few months of preparation in some *Gymnasium*, the only instruction he appears to have received in any public school, he repaired to Jena; and continued there for three years; after which he spent one season in the Leipzig University, and another, 'to complete his studies,'

in that of Wittenberg. It seems to have been at Jena that he became acquainted with Friedrich Schlegel; where also, we suppose, he studied under Fichte. For both of these men he conceived a high admiration and affection; and both of them had, clearly enough, 'a great and abiding effect on his whole life.' Fichte, in particular, whose lofty eloquence and clear calm enthusiasm are said to have made him irresistible as a teacher,[2] had quite gained Novalis to his doctrines; indeed the *Wissenschaftslehre*, which, as we are told of the latter, 'he studied with unwearied zeal,' appears to have been the groundwork of all his future speculations in Philosophy. Besides these metaphysical inquiries, and the usual attainments in classical literature, Novalis seems 'to have devoted himself with ardour 'to the Physical Sciences, and to Mathematics the basis of 'them:' at an early period of his life he had read much of History 'with extraordinary eagerness;' Poems had from of old been 'the delight of his leisure;' particularly that species denominated *Mährchen* (Traditionary Tale), which continued a favourite with him to the last, as almost from infancy it had been a chosen amusement of his to read these compositions, and even to recite such, of his own invention. One remarkable piece of that sort he has himself left us, inserted in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, his chief literary performance.

But the time had now arrived when study must become subordinate to action, and what is called a profession be fixed upon. At the breaking-out of the French War, Novalis had been seized with a strong and altogether unexpected taste for a military life: however, the arguments and pressing entreaties of his friends ultimately prevailed over this whim; it seems to have been settled that he should follow his father's line of occupation; and so, about the end of 1794, he removed to Arnstadt in Thuringia, 'to train himself in practical affairs under the Kreis-Amtmann Just.' In this *Kreis-Amtmann* (Manager of a Circle) he found a wise and kind friend; applied himself honestly to business; and in all his serious calculations may have looked forward to a life as smooth and commonplace as his past years had been. One incident, and that too of no un-

[2] Schelling, we have been informed, gives account of Fichte and his *Wissenschaftslehre* to the following effect: 'The Philosophy of Fichte was like 'lightning; it appeared only for a moment, but it kindled a fire which will 'burn forever.'

usual sort, appears, in Tieck's opinion, to have altered the whole form of his existence.

'It was not very long after his arrival at Arnstadt, when in a country mansion of the neighbourhood, he became acquainted with Sophie von K——. The first glance of this fair and wonderfully lovely form was decisive for his whole life; nay, we may say that the feeling, which now penetrated and inspired him, was the substance and essence of his whole life. Sometimes, in the look and figure of a child, there will stamp itself an expression, which, as it is too angelic and ethereally beautiful, we are forced to call unearthly or celestial; and commonly, at sight of such purified and almost transparent faces, there comes on us a fear that they are too tender and delicately fashioned for this life; that it is Death, or Immortality, which looks forth so expressively on us from these glancing eyes; and too often a quick decay converts our mournful foreboding into certainty. Still more affecting are such figures when their first period is happily passed over, and they come before us blooming on the eve of maidhood. All persons that have known this wondrous loved one of our Friend, agree in testifying that no description can express in what grace and celestial harmony the fair being moved, what beauty shone in her, what softness and majesty encircled her. Novalis became a poet every time he chanced to speak of it. She had concluded her thirteenth year when he first saw her: the spring and summer of 1795 were the blooming time of his life; every hour that he could spare from business he spent in Grüningen: and in the fall of that same year he obtained the wished-for promise from Sophie's parents.'

Unhappily, however, these halcyon days were of too short continuance. Soon after this, Sophie fell dangerously sick 'of a fever, attended with pains in the side;' and her lover had the worst consequences to fear. By and by, indeed, the fever left her; but not the pain, 'which by its violence still spoiled for her many a fair hour,' and gave rise to various apprehensions, though the Physician asserted that it was of no importance. Partly satisfied with this favourable prognostication, Novalis had gone to Weissenfels, to his parents; and was full of business; being now appointed Auditor in the department of which his father was Director: through winter the news from Grüningen were of a favourable sort; in spring he visited the family himself, and found his Sophie to all appearance well. But suddenly, in summer, his hopes and occupations were interrupted by tidings that 'she was in Jena, and had undergone a surgical operation.' Her disease was an abscess in the liver: it had been her wish that he should not hear of her danger till the worst were over. The Jena Surgeon gave hopes of recovery,

though a slow one; but ere long the operation had to be repeated, and now it was feared that his patient's strength was too far exhausted. The young maiden bore all this with inflexible courage and the cheerfulest resignation: her Mother and Sister, Novalis, with his Parents and two of his Brothers, all deeply interested in the event, did their utmost to comfort her. In December, by her own wish, she returned home; but it was evident that she grew weaker and weaker. Novalis went and came between Grüningen and Weissenfels, where also he found a house of mourning; for Erasmus, one of these two Brothers, had long been sickly, and was now believed to be dying.

'The 17th of March,' says Tieck, 'was the fifteenth birthday of his Sophie; and on the 19th, about noon, she departed. No one durst tell Novalis these tidings; at last his Brother Carl undertook it. The poor youth shut himself up, and after three days and three nights of weeping, set out for Arnstadt, that there, with his true friend, he might be near the spot, which now hid the remains of what was dearest to him. On the 14th of April, his Brother Erasmus also left this world. Novalis wrote to inform his Brother Carl of the event, who had been obliged to make a journey into Lower Saxony: "Be of good courage," said he, "Erasmus has prevailed; the flowers of our fair garland are dropping off Here, one by one, that they may be united Yonder, lovelier and forever."'

Among the papers published in these Volumes are three letters, written about this time, which mournfully indicate the author's mood. 'It has grown Evening around me,' says he, 'while I was looking into the red of Morning. My grief is 'boundless as my love. For three years she has been my hourly 'thought. She alone bound me to life, to the country, to my oc-'cupations. With her I am parted from all; for now I scarcely 'have *myself* any more. But it has grown Evening; and I 'feel as if I had to travel early; and so I would fain be at rest, 'and see nothing but kind faces about me;—all in her spirit 'would I live, be soft and mild-hearted as she was.' And again, some weeks later: 'I live over the old, bygone life here, in still 'meditation. Yesterday I was twenty-five years old. I was 'in Grüningen, and stood beside her grave. It is a friendly 'spot; enclosed with simple white railing; lies apart, and high. 'There is still room in it. The village, with its blooming gar-'dens, leans up round the hill; and at this point and that the 'eye loses itself in blue distances. I know you would have liked

'to stand by me, and stick the flowers, my birthday gifts, one 'by one into her hillock. This time two years, she made me 'a gay present, with a flag and national cockade on it. To-'day her parents gave me the little things which she, still joy-'fully, had received on her last birthday. Friend,—it con-'tinues Evening, and will soon be Night. If you go away, 'think of me kindly, and visit, when you return, the still house, 'where your Friend rests forever, with the ashes of his beloved. 'Fare you well!'—Nevertheless, a singular composure came over him; from the very depths of his grief arose a peace and pure joy, such as till then he had never known.

'In this season,' observes Tieck, 'Novalis lived only to his sorrow: it was natural for him to regard the visible and the invisible world as one; and to distinguish Life and Death only by his longing for the latter. At the same time too, Life became for him a glorified Life; and his whole being melted away as into a bright, conscious vision of a higher Existence. From the sacredness of Sorrow, from heartfelt love and the pious wish for death, his temper and all his conceptions are to be explained: and it seems possible that this time, with its deep griefs, planted in him the germ of death, if it was not, in any case, his appointed lot to be so soon snatched away from us.

'He remained many weeks in Thuringia; and came back comforted and truly purified, to his engagements; which he pursued more zealously than ever, though he now regarded himself as a stranger on the earth. In this period, some earlier, many later, especially in the Autumn of this year, occur most of those compositions, which, in the way of extract and selection, we have here given to the Public, under the title of *Fragments;* so likewise the *Hymns to the Night.*'

Such is our Biographer's account of this matter, and of the weighty inference it has led him to. We have detailed it the more minutely, and almost in the very words of the text, the better to put our readers in a condition for judging on what grounds Tieck rests his opinion, That herein lies the key to the whole spiritual history of Novalis, that 'the feeling which now 'penetrated and inspired him may be said to have been the 'substance of his Life.' It would ill become us to contradict one so well qualified to judge of all subjects, and who enjoyed such peculiar opportunities for forming a right judgment of this: meanwhile we may say that, to our own minds, after all consideration, the certainty of this hypothesis will nowise become clear. Or rather, perhaps, it is to the expression, to the too determinate and exclusive language in which the hypothesis

is worded, that we should object; for so plain does the truth of the case seem to us, we cannot but believe that Tieck himself would consent to modify his statement. That the whole philosophical and moral existence of such a man as Novalis should have been shaped and determined by the death of a young girl, almost a child, specially distinguished, so far as is shown, by nothing save her beauty, which at any rate must have been very short-lived,—will doubtless seem to every one a singular concatenation. We cannot but think that some result precisely similar in moral effect might have been attained by many different means; nay that by one means or another, it would not have failed to be attained. For spirits like Novalis, earthly fortune is in no instance so sweet and smooth, that it does not by and by teach the great doctrine of *Entsagen*, of 'Renunciation,' by which alone, as a wise man well known to Herr Tieck has observed, 'can the real entrance on Life be properly said to begin.' Experience, the grand Schoolmaster, seems to have taught Novalis this doctrine very early, by the wreck of his first passionate wish; and herein lies the real influence of Sophie von K, on his character; an influence which, as we imagine, many other things might and would have equally exerted: for it is less the severity of the Teacher than the aptness of the Pupil that secures the lesson; nor do the purifying effects of frustrated Hope, and Affection which in this world will ever be homeless, depend on the worth or loveliness of its objects, but on that of the heart which cherished it, and can draw mild wisdom from so stern a disappointment. We do not say that Novalis continued the same as if this young maiden had not been; causes and effects connecting every man and thing with every other extend through all Time and Space; but surely it appears unjust to represent him as so altogether pliant in the hands of Accident; a mere pipe for Fortune to play tunes on; and which sounded a mystic, deep, almost unearthly melody, simply because a young woman was beautiful and mortal.

We feel the more justified in these hard-hearted and so unromantic strictures, on reading the very next paragraph of Tieck's Narrative. Directly on the back of this occurrence, Novalis goes to Freyberg; and there in 1798, it may be therefore somewhat more or somewhat less than a year after the death of his first love, forms an acquaintance, and an engage-

ment to marry, with a 'Julie von Ch——'! Indeed, ever afterwards, to the end, his life appears to have been more than usually cheerful and happy. Tieck knows not well what to say of this betrothment, which in the eyes of most Novelreaders will have so shocking an appearance: he admits that 'perhaps to any but his intimate friends it may seem singular;' asserts, notwithstanding, that 'Sophie, as may be seen also in his writings, 'continued the centre of his thoughts; nay, as one departed, 'she stood in higher reverence with him than when visible and 'near;' and hurrying on, almost as over an unsafe subject, declares that Novalis felt nevertheless 'as if loveliness of mind and person might, in some measure, replace his loss;' and so leaves us to our own reflections on the matter. We consider it as throwing light on the above criticism; and greatly restricting our acceptance of Tieck's theory.

Yet perhaps, after all, it is only in a Minerva-Press Novel, or to the more tender Imagination, that such a proceeding would seem very blamable. Constancy, in its true sense, may be called the root of all excellence; especially excellent is constancy in active well-doing, in friendly helpfulness to those that love us, and to those that hate us: but constancy in passive suffering, again, in spite of the high value put upon it in Circulating Libraries, is a distinctly inferior virtue, rather an accident than a virtue, and at all events is of extreme rarity in this world. To Novalis, his Sophie might still be as a saintly presence, mournful and unspeakably mild, to be worshipped in the inmost shrine of his memory: but worship of this sort is not man's sole business; neither should we censure Novalis that he dries his tears, and once more looks abroad with hope on the earth, which is still, as it was before, the strangest complex of mystery and light, of joy as well as sorrow. 'Life belongs to the living; and he that lives must be prepared for vicissitudes.' The questionable circumstance with Novalis is his perhaps too great rapidity in that second courtship; a fault or misfortune the more to be regretted, as this marriage also was to remain a project, and only the anticipation of it to be enjoyed by him.

It was for the purpose of studying mineralogy, under the famous Werner, that Novalis had gone to Freyberg. For this science he had great fondness, as indeed for all the physical

sciences; which, if we may judge from his writings, he seems to have prosecuted on a great and original principle, very different both from that of our idle theorisers and generalisers, and that of the still more melancholy class who merely 'collect facts,' and for the torpor or total extinction of the thinking faculty, strive to make up by the more assiduous use of the blowpipe and goniometer. The commencement of a work, entitled the *Disciples at Sais*, intended, as Tieck informs us, to be a 'Physical Romance,' was written in Freyberg, at this time: but it lay unfinished, unprosecuted; and now comes before us as a very mysterious fragment, disclosing scientific depths, which we have not light to see into, much less means to fathom and accurately measure. The various hypothetic views of 'Nature,' that is, of the visible Creation, which are here given out in the words of the several 'Pupils,' differ, almost all of them, more or less, from any that we have ever elsewhere met with. To this work we shall have occasion to refer more particularly in the sequel.

The acquaintance which Novalis formed, soon after this, with the elder Schlegel (August Wilhelm), and still more that of Tieck, whom also he first met in Jena, seems to have operated a considerable diversion in his line of study. Tieck and the Schlegels, with some less active associates, among whom are now mentioned Wackenroder and Novalis, were at this time engaged in their far-famed campaign against Duncedom, or what called itself the 'Old School' of Literature; which old and rather despicable 'School' they had already, both by regular and guerrilla warfare, reduced to great straits; as ultimately, they are reckoned to have succeeded in utterly extirpating it, or at least driving it back to the very confines of its native Cimmeria.[3] It seems to have been in connexion with these men, that Novalis first came before the world as a writer: certain of his *Fragments* under the title of *Blüthenstaub* (Pollen of Flowers), his *Hymns to the Night*, and various poetical compositions, were sent forth in F. Schlegel's *Musen-Almanach* and other periodicals under the same or kindred management. Novalis himself seems to profess that it was Tieck's influence which chiefly 'reawakened Poetry in him.' As to what reception these pieces met with, we have no information: however,

[3] See *Miscellanies*, vol. i., Appendix I. No. 2. § *Tieck*.

Novalis seems to have been ardent and diligent in his new pursuit, as in his old ones; and no less happy than diligent.

'In the summer of 1800,' says Tieck, 'I saw him for the first time, while visiting my friend Wilhelm Schlegel; and our acquaintance soon became the most confidential friendship. They were bright days those, which we passed with Schlegel, Schelling and some other friends. On my return homewards, I visited him in his house, and made acquaintance with his family. Here he read me the *Disciples at Sais*, and many of his *Fragments*. He escorted me as far as Halle; and we enjoyed in Giebichenstein, in the Riechardts' house, some other delightful hours. About this time, the first thought of his *Ofterdingen* had occurred. At an earlier period, certain of his *Spiritual Songs* had been composed: they were to form part of a Christian Hymnbook, which he meant to accompany with a collection of Sermons. For the rest, he was very diligent in his professional labours; whatever he did was done with the heart; the smallest concern was not insignificant to him.'

The professional labours here alluded to, seem to have left much leisure on his hands; room for frequent change of place, and even of residence. Not long afterwards, we find him 'living for a long while in a solitary spot of the Güldne Aue in Thuringia, at the foot of the Kyffhäuser Mountain;' his chief society two military men, subsequently Generals; 'in which solitude great part of his *Ofterdingen* was written.' The first volume of this *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, a sort of Art-Romance, intended, as he himself said, to be an 'Apotheosis of Poetry,' was erelong published; under what circumstances, or with what result, we have, as before, no notice. Tieck had for some time been resident in Jena, and at intervals saw much of Novalis. On preparing to quit that abode, he went to pay him a farewell visit at Weissenfels; found him 'somewhat paler,' but full of gladness and hope; 'quite inspired with plans of his future hap-'piness; his house was already fitted up; in a few months 'he was to be wedded: no less zealously did he speak of the 'speedy conclusion of *Ofterdingen*, and other books; his life 'seemed expanding in the richest activity and love.' This was in 1800: four years ago Novalis had longed and looked for death, and it was not appointed him; now life is again rich and far-extending in his eyes, and its close is at hand. Tieck parted with him, and it proved to be forever.

In the month of August, Novalis, preparing for his journey to Freyberg on so joyful an occasion, was alarmed with an appearance of blood proceeding from the lungs. The Physician

treated it as a slight matter; nevertheless, the marriage was postponed. He went to Dresden with his Parents, for medical advice; abode there for some time in no improving state; on learning the accidental death of a young brother at home, he ruptured a blood-vessel; and the Doctor then declared his malady incurable. This, as usual in such maladies, was nowise the patient's own opinion; he wished to try a warmer climate, but was thought too weak for the journey. In January (1801) he returned home, visibly, to all but himself, in rapid decline. His bride had already been to see him, in Dresden. We may give the rest in Tieck's words:

'The nearer he approached his end, the more confidently did he expect a speedy recovery; for the cough diminished, and excepting langour, he had no feeling of sickness. With the hope and the longing for life, new talent and fresh strength seemed also to awaken in him; he thought, with renewed love, of all his projected labours; he determined on writing *Ofterdingen* over again from the very beginning; and shortly before his death, he said on one occasion, "Never till now did I know what Poetry was; innumerable Songs and Poems, and of quite different stamp from any of my former ones, have arisen in me." From the nineteenth of March, the death-day of his Sophie, he became visibly weaker; many of his friends visited him; and he felt great joy when, on the twenty-first, his true and oldest friend, Friedrich Schlegel, came to him from Jena. With him he conversed at great length; especially upon their several literary operations. During these days he was very lively; his nights too were quiet; and he enjoyed pretty sound sleep. On the twenty-fifth, about six in the morning, he made his brother hand him certain books, that he might look for something; then he ordered breakfast, and talked cheerfully till eight; towards nine he bade his brother play a little to him on the harpsichord, and in the course of the music fell asleep. Friedrich Schlegel soon afterwards came into the room, and found him quietly sleeping: this sleep lasted till near twelve, when without the smallest motion he passed away, and, unchanged in death, retained his common friendly look as if he yet lived.

'So died,' continues the affectionate Biographer, 'before he had completed his twenty-ninth year, this our Friend; in whom his extensive acquirements, his philosophical talent and his poetic genius must alike obtain our love and admiration. As he had so far outrun his time, our country might have expected extraordinary things from such gifts, had this early death not overtaken him: as it is, the unfinished Writings he left behind him have already had a wide influence; and many of his great thoughts will yet, in time coming, lend their inspiration, and noble minds and deep thinkers will be enlightened and enkindled by the sparks of his genius.

'Novalis was tall, slender and of noble proportions. He wore his

light-brown hair in long clustering locks, which at that time was less unusual than it would be now; his hazel eye was clear and glancing; and the colour of his face, especially of the fine brow, almost transparent. Hand and foot were somewhat too large, and without fine character. His look was at all times cheerful and kind. For those who distinguish a man only in so far as he puts himself forward, or by studious breeding, by fashionable bearing, endeavours to shine or to be singular, Novalis was lost in the crowd: to the more practised eye, again, he presented a figure which might be called beautiful. In outline and expression his face strikingly resembled that of the Evangelist John, as we see him in the large noble Painting by Albrecht Dürer, preserved at Nürnberg and München.

'In speaking, he was lively and loud, his gestures strong. I never saw him tired: though we had talked till far in the night, it was still only on purpose that he stopped, for the sake of rest, and even then he used to read before sleeping. Tedium he never felt, even in oppressive company, among mediocre men; for he was sure to find out one or other, who could give him yet some new piece of knowledge, such as he could turn to use, insignificant as it might seem. His kindliness, his frank bearing, made him a universal favourite: his skill in the art of social intercourse was so great, that smaller minds did not perceive how high he stood above them. Though in conversation he delighted most to unfold the deeps of the soul, and spoke as inspired of the regions of invisible worlds, yet was he mirthful as a child; would jest in free artless gaiety, and heartily give-in to the jestings of his company. Without vanity, without learned haughtiness, far from every affectation and hypocrisy, he was a genuine, true man, the purest and loveliest embodiment of a high immortal spirit.'

So much for the outward figure and history of Novalis. Respecting his inward structure and significance, which our readers are here principally interested to understand, we have already acknowledged that we had no complete insight to boast of. The slightest perusal of his Writings indicates to us a mind of wonderful depth and originality; but at the same time, of a nature or habit so abstruse, and altogether different from anything we ourselves have notice or experience of, that to penetrate fairly into its essential character, much more to picture it forth in visual distinctness, would be an extremely difficult task. Nay perhaps, if attempted by the means familiar to us, an impossible task: for Novalis belongs to that class of persons, who do not recognise the 'syllogistic method' as the chief organ for investigating truth, or feel themselves bound at all times to stop short where its light fails them. Many of his opinions he would despair of proving in the most patient Court

of Law; and would remain well content that they should be disbelieved there. He much loved, and had assiduously studied, Jacob Böhme and other mystical writers; and was, openly enough, in good part a Mystic himself. Not indeed what we English, in common speech, call a Mystic; which means only a man whom we do not understand, and, in self-defence, reckon or would fain reckon a Dunce. Novalis was a Mystic, or had an affinity with Mysticism, in the primary and true meaning of that word, exemplified in some shape among our own Puritan Divines, and which at this day carries no opprobrium with it in Germany, or, except among certain more unimportant classes, in any other country. Nay, in this sense, great honours are recorded of Mysticism: Tasso, as may be seen in several of his prose writings, was professedly a Mystic; Dante is regarded as a chief man of that class.

Nevertheless, with all due tolerance or reverence for Novalis's Mysticism, the question still returns on us: How shall we understand it, and in any measure shadow it forth? How may that spiritual condition, which by its own account is like pure Light, colourless, formless, infinite, be represented by mere Logic-Painters, mere Engravers we might say, who, except copper and burin, producing the most finite black-on-white, have no means of representing anything? Novalis himself has a line or two, and no more, expressly on Mysticism: 'What is 'Mysticism?' asks he. 'What is it that should come to be 'treated mystically? Religion, Love, Nature, Polity. — All 'select things (*alles Auserwählte*) have a reference to Mys-'ticism. If all men were but one pair of lovers, the difference 'between Mysticism and Non-Mysticism were at an end.' In which little sentence, unhappily, our reader obtains no clearness; feels rather as if he were looking into darkness visible. We must entreat him, nevertheless, to keep up his spirits in this business; and above all, to assist us with his friendliest, cheerfulest endeavour: perhaps some faint far-off view of that same mysterious Mysticism may at length rise upon us.

To ourselves it somewhat illustrates the nature of Novalis's opinions, when we consider the then and present state of German metaphysical science generally; and the fact, stated above, that he gained his first notions on this subject from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. It is true, as Tieck remarks, 'he sought to open for himself a new path in Philosophy; to unite Philo-

sophy with Religion;' and so diverged in some degree from his first instructor; or, as it more probably seemed to himself, prosecuted Fichte's scientific inquiry into its highest practical results. At all events, his metaphysical creed, so far as we can gather it from these Writings, appears everywhere in its essential lineaments synonymous with what little we understand of Fichte's, and might indeed, safely enough for our present purpose, be classed under the head of Kantism, or German metaphysics generally.

Now, without entering into the intricacies of German Philosophy, we need here only advert to the character of Idealism, on which it is everywhere founded, and which universally pervades it. In all German systems, since the time of Kant, it is the fundamental principle to deny the existence of Matter; or rather we should say, to believe it in a radically different sense from that in which the Scotch philosopher strives to demonstrate it, and the English Unphilosopher believes it without demonstration. To any of our readers, who has dipped never so slightly into metaphysical reading, this Idealism will be no inconceivable thing. Indeed it is singular how widely diffused, and under what different aspects, we meet with it among the most dissimilar classes of mankind. Our Bishop Berkeley seems to have adopted it from religious inducements: Father Boscovich was led to a very cognate result, in his *Theoria Philosophiæ Naturalis*, from merely mathematical considerations. Of the ancient Pyrrho, or the modern Hume, we do not speak: but in the opposite end of the Earth, as Sir W. Jones informs us, a similar theory, of immemorial age, prevails among the theologians of Hindostan. Nay Professor Stewart has declared his opinion, that whoever at some time of his life has not entertained this theory, may reckon that he has yet shown no talent for metaphysical research.

Neither is it any argument against the Idealist to say that, since he denies the absolute existence of Matter, he ought in conscience to deny its relative existence; and plunge over precipices, and run himself through with swords, by way of recreation, since these, like all other material things, are only phantasms and spectra, and therefore of no consequence. If a man, corporeally taken, is but a phantasm and spectrum himself, all this will ultimately amount to much the same as it did before. Yet herein lies Dr. Reid's grand triumph over the

Sceptics; which is as good as no triumph whatever. For as to the argument which he and his followers insist on, under all possible variety of figures, it amounts only to this very plain consideration, that 'men naturally, and without reasoning, *believe* in the existence of Matter;' and seems, philosophically speaking, not to have any value; nay the introduction of it into Philosophy may be considered as an act of suicide on the part of that science, the life and business of which, that of '*interpreting* Appearances,' is hereby at an end. Curious it is, moreover, to observe how these Commonsense Philosophers, men who brag chiefly of their irrefragable logic, and keep watch and ward, as if this were their special trade, against 'Mysticism' and 'Visionary Theories,' are themselves obliged to base their whole system on Mysticism, and a Theory; on Faith, in short, and that of a very comprehensive kind; the Faith, namely, either that man's Senses are themselves Divine, or that they afford not only an honest, but a *literal* representation of the workings of some Divinity. So true is it that for these men also, all knowledge of the visible rests on belief of the invisible, and derives its first meaning and certainty therefrom!

The Idealist, again, boasts that his Philosophy is Transcendental, that is, 'ascending *beyond* the senses;' which, he asserts, *all* Philosophy, properly so called, by its nature is and must be: and in this way he is led to various unexpected conclusions. To a Transcendentalist, Matter has an existence, but only as a Phenomenon: were *we* not there, neither would it be there; it is a mere Relation, or rather the result of a Relation between our living Souls and the great First Cause; and depends for its apparent qualities on *our* bodily and mental organs; having itself *no* intrinsic qualities; being, in the common sense of that word, Nothing. The tree is green and hard, not of its own natural virtue, but simply because my eye and my hand are fashioned so as to discern such and such appearances under such and such conditions. Nay, as an Idealist might say, even on the most popular grounds, *must* it not be so? Bring a sentient Being, with eyes a little different, with fingers ten times harder than mine; and to him that Thing which I call Tree shall be yellow and soft, as truly as to me it is green and hard. Form his Nervous-structure in all points the *reverse* of mine, and this same Tree shall not be combustible or heat-producing, but dissoluble and cold-producing, not

high and convex, but deep and concave; shall simply have *all* properties exactly the reverse of those I attribute to it. There is, in fact, says Fichte, no Tree there; but only a Manifestation of Power from something which is *not I*. The same is true of material Nature at large, of the whole visible Universe, with all its movements, figures, accidents and qualities; all are Impressions produced on *me* by something *different from me*. This, we suppose, may be the foundation of what Fichte means by his far-famed *Ich* and *Nicht-Ich* (I and Not-I); words which, taking lodging (to use the Hudibrastic phrase) in certain 'heads that were to be let unfurnished,' occasioned a hollow echo, as of Laughter, from the empty Apartments; though the words are in themselves quite harmless, and may represent the basis of a metaphysical Philosophy as fitly as any other words.

But farther, and what is still stranger than such Idealism, according to these Kantean systems, the organs of the Mind too, what is called the Understanding, are of no less arbitrary, and, as it were accidental character than those of the Body. Time and Space themselves are not external but internal entities: they have no outward existence, there is no Time and no Space *out* of the mind; they are mere *forms* of man's spiritual being, *laws* under which his thinking nature is constituted to act. This seems the hardest conclusion of all; but it is an important one with Kant; and is not given forth as a dogma; but carefully deduced in his *Critik der Reinen Vernunft* with great precision, and the strictest form of argument.

The reader would err widely who supposed that this Transcendental system of Metaphysics was a mere intellectual card-castle, or logical hocus-pocus, contrived from sheer idleness and for sheer idleness, being without any bearing on the practical interests of men. On the contrary, however false, or however true, it is the most serious in its purport of all Philosophies propounded in these latter centuries; has been taught chiefly by men of the loftiest and most earnest character; and does bear, with a direct and highly comprehensive influence, on the most vital interests of men. To say nothing of the views it opens in regard to the course and management of what is called Natural Science, we cannot but perceive that its effects, for such as adopt it, on Morals and Religion, must in these days be of almost boundless importance. To take only that last and seemingly strangest doctrine, for example, concerning Time

and Space, we shall find that to the Kantist it yields, almost immediately, a remarkable result of this sort. If Time and Space have no absolute existence, no existence out of our minds, it removes a stumbling-block from the very threshold of our Theology. For on this ground, when we say that the Deity is omnipresent and eternal, that with Him it is a universal Here and Now, we say nothing wonderful; nothing but that He also created Time and Space, that Time and Space are not laws of His being, but only of ours. Nay to the Transcendentalist, clearly enough, the whole question of the origin and existence of Nature must be greatly simplified: the old hostility of Matter is at an end, for Matter is itself annihilated; and the black Spectre, Atheism, 'with all its sickly dews,' melts into nothingness forever. But farther, if it be, as Kant maintains, that the logical mechanism of the mind is arbitrary, so to speak, and might have been made different, it will follow, that all inductive conclusions, all conclusions of the Understanding, have only a relative truth, are true only for *us*, and *if* some other thing be true.

Thus far Hume and Kant go together, in this branch of the inquiry: but here occurs the most total, diametrical divergence between them. We allude to the recognition, by these Transcendentalists, of a higher faculty in man than Understanding; of Reason (*Vernunft*), the pure, ultimate light of our nature; wherein, as they assert, lies the foundation of all Poetry, Virtue, Religion; things which are properly beyond the province of the Understanding, of which the Understanding *can* take no cognisance, except a false one. The elder Jacobi, who indeed is no Kantist, says once, we remember: 'It is the instinct of Understanding to *contradict* Reason.' Admitting this last distinction and subordination, supposing it scientifically demonstrated, what numberless and weightiest consequences would follow from it alone! These we must leave the considerate reader to deduce for himself; observing only farther, that the *Teologia Mistica*, so much venerated by Tasso in his philosophical writings; the 'Mysticism' alluded to by Novalis; and generally all true Christian Faith and Devotion, appear, so far as we can see, more or less included in this doctrine of the Transcendentalists; under their several shapes, the essence of them all being what is here designated by the name Reason, and set forth as the true sovereign of man's mind.

How deeply these and the like principles had impressed

themselves on Novalis, we see more and more, the farther we study his Writings. Naturally a deep, religious, contemplative spirit; purified also, as we have seen, by harsh Affliction, and familiar in the 'Sanctuary of Sorrow,' he comes before us as the most ideal of all Idealists. For him the material Creation is but an Appearance, a typical shadow in which the Deity manifests himself to man. Not only has the unseen world a reality, but the only reality: the rest being not metaphorically, but literally and in scientific strictness, 'a show;' in the words of the Poet, '*Schall und Rauch umnebelnd Himmels Gluth*, 'Sound and Smoke overclouding the Splendour of Heaven.' The Invisible World is near us: or rather it is here, in us and about us; were the fleshly coil removed from our Soul, the glories of the Unseen were even now around us; as the Ancients fabled of the Spheral Music. Thus, not in word only, but in truth and sober belief, he feels himself encompassed by the Godhead; feels in every thought, that 'in Him he lives, moves and has his being.'

On his Philosophic and Poetic procedure, all this has its natural influence. The aim of Novalis's whole Philosophy, we might say, is to preach and establish the Majesty of Reason, in that stricter sense; to conquer for it all provinces of human thought, and everywhere reduce its vassal, Understanding, into fealty, the right and only useful relation for it. Mighty tasks in this sort lay before himself; of which, in these Writings of his, we trace only scattered indications. In fact, all that he has left is in the shape of Fragment; detached expositions and combinations, deep, brief glimpses: but such seems to be their general tendency. One character to be noted in many of these, often too obscure speculations, is his peculiar manner of viewing Nature: his habit, as it were, of considering Nature rather in the concrete, not analytically and as a divisible Aggregate, but as a self-subsistent universally connected Whole. This also is perhaps partly the fruit of his Idealism. 'He had formed the 'Plan,' we are informed, 'of a peculiar Encyclopedical Work, 'in which experiences and ideas from all the different sciences 'were mutually to elucidate, confirm and enforce each other.' In this work he had even made some progress. Many of the 'Thoughts,' and short Aphoristic observations, here published, were intended for it; of such, apparently, it was, for the most part, to have consisted.

As a Poet, Novalis is no less Idealistic than as a Philosopher. His poems are breathings of a high devout soul, feeling always that here he has no home, but looking, as in clear vision, to a 'city that hath foundations.' He loves external Nature with a singular depth; nay, we might say, he reverences her, and holds unspeakable communings with her: for Nature is no longer dead, hostile Matter, but the veil and mysterious Garment of the Unseen; as it were, the Voice with which the Deity proclaims himself to man. These two qualities,—his pure religious temper, and heartfelt love of Nature,—bring him into true poetic relation both with the spiritual and the material World, and perhaps constitute his chief worth as a Poet; for which art he seems to have originally a genuine, but no exclusive or even very decided endowment.

His moral persuasions, as evinced in his Writings and Life, derive themselves naturally enough from the same source. It is the morality of a man, to whom the Earth and all its glories are in truth a vapour and a Dream, and the Beauty of Goodness the *only* real possession. Poetry, Virtue, Religion, which for other men have but, as it were, a traditionary and imagined existence, are for him the everlasting basis of the Universe; and all earthly acquirements, all with which Ambition, Hope, Fear, can tempt us to toil and sin, are in very deed but a picture of the brain, some reflex shadowed on the mirror of the Infinite, but in themselves air and nothingness. Thus, to live in that Light of Reason, to have, even while here and encircled with this Vision of Existence, our abode in that Eternal City, is the highest and sole duty of man. These things Novalis figures to himself under various images: sometimes he seems to represent the Primeval essence of Being as Love; at other times, he speaks in emblems, of which it would be still more difficult to give a just account; which, therefore, at present, we shall not farther notice.

For now, with these far-off sketches of an exposition, the reader must hold himself ready to look into Novalis, for a little, with his own eyes. Whoever has honestly, and with attentive outlook, accompanied us along these wondrous outskirts of Idealism, may find himself as able to interpret Novalis as the majority of German readers would be; which, we think, is fair measure on our part. We shall not attempt any farther commentary; fearing that it might be too difficult and too unthank-

ful a business. Our first extract is from the *Lehrlinge zu Sais* (Pupils at Sais), adverted to above. That 'Physical Romance,' which, for the rest, contains no story or indication of a story, but only poetised philosophical speeches, and the strangest shadowy allegorical allusions, and indeed is only carried the length of two Chapters, commences, without note of preparation, in this singular wise:

'I. THE PUPIL.—Men travel in manifold paths: whoso traces and compares these, will find strange Figures come to light; Figures which seem as if they belonged to that great Cipher-writing which one meets with everywhere, on wings of birds, shells of eggs, in clouds, in the snow, in crystals, in forms of rocks, in freezing waters, in the interior and exterior of mountains, of plants, animals, men, in the lights of the sky, in plates of glass and pitch when touched and struck on, in the filings round the magnet, and the singular conjunctures of Chance. In such Figures one anticipates the key to that wondrous Writing, the grammar of it; but this Anticipation will not fix itself into shape, and appears as if, after all, it would not become such a key for us. An *Alcahest* seems poured out over the senses of men. Only for a moment will their wishes, their thoughts thicken into form. Thus do their Anticipations arise; but after short whiles, all is again swimming vaguely before them, even as it did.

'From afar I heard say, that Unintelligibility was but the result of Unintelligence; that this sought what itself had, and so could find nowhere else; also that we did not understand Speech, because Speech did not, would not, understand itself; that the genuine Sanscrit spoke for the sake of speaking, because speaking was its pleasure and its nature.

'Not long thereafter, said one: No explanation is required for Holy Writing. Whoso speaks truly is full of eternal life, and wonderfully related to genuine mysteries does his Writing appear to us, for it is a Concord from the Symphony of the Universe.

'Surely this voice meant our Teacher; for it is he that can collect the indications which lie scattered on all sides. A singular light kindles in his looks, when at length the high Rune lies before us, and he watches in our eyes whether the star has yet risen upon us, which is to make the Figure visible and intelligible. Does he see us sad, that the darkness will not withdraw? He consoles us, and promises the faithful assiduous seer better fortune in time. Often has he told us how, when he was a child, the impulse to employ his senses, to busy, to fill them, left him no rest. He looked at the stars, and imitated their courses and positions in the sand. Into the ocean of air he gazed incessantly; and never wearied contemplating its clearness, its movements, its clouds, its lights. He gathered stones, flowers, insects, of all sorts, and spread them out in manifold wise, in rows before him. To men and animals he paid heed; on the shore of the sea he sat, collected muscles. Over his own heart and his own thoughts he watched attentively. He knew not whi-

ther his longing was carrying him. As he grew up, he wandered far and wide; viewed other lands, other seas, new atmospheres, new rocks, unknown plants, animals, men; descended into caverns, saw how in courses and varying strata the edifice of the Earth was completed, and fashioned clay into strange figures of rocks. By and by, he came to find everywhere objects already known, but wonderfully mingled, united; and thus often extraordinary things came to shape in him. He soon became aware of combinations in all, of conjunctures, concurrences. Erelong, he no more saw anything alone.—In great variegated images, the perceptions of his senses crowded round him; he heard, saw, touched and thought at once. He rejoiced to bring strangers together. Now the stars were men, now men were stars, the stones animals, the clouds plants; he sported with powers and appearances; he knew where and how this and that was to be found, to be brought into action; and so himself struck over the strings, for tones and touches of his own.

'What has passed with him since then he does not disclose to us. He tells us that we ourselves, led on by him and our own desire, will discover what has passed with him. Many of us have withdrawn from him. They returned to their parents, and learned trades. Some have been sent out by him, we know not whither; he selected them. Of these, some have been but a short time there, others longer. One was still a child; scarcely was he come, when our Teacher was for passing him any more instruction. This child had large dark eyes with azure ground, his skin shone like lilies, and his locks like light little clouds when it is growing evening. His voice pierced through all our hearts; willingly would we have given him our flowers, stones, pens, all we had. He smiled with an infinite earnestness; and we had a strange delight beside him. One day he will come again, said our Teacher, and then our lessons end.—Along with him he sent one, for whom we had often been sorry. Always sad he looked; he had been long years here; nothing would succeed with him; when we sought crystals or flowers, he seldom found. He saw dimly at a distance; to lay down variegated rows skilfully he had no power. He was so apt to break everything. Yet none had such eagerness, such pleasure in hearing and listening. At last,—it was before that Child came into our circle,—he all at once grew cheerful and expert. One day he had gone out sad; he did not return, and the night came on. We were very anxious for him; suddenly, as the morning dawned, we heard his voice in a neighbouring grove. He was singing a high, joyful song; we were all surprised; the Teacher looked to the East, such a look as I shall never see in him again. The singer soon came forth to us, and brought, with unspeakable blessedness on his face, a simple-looking little stone, of singular shape. The Teacher took it in his hand, and kissed him long; then looked at us with wet eyes, and laid this little stone on an empty space, which lay in the midst of other stones, just where, like radii, many rows of them met together.

'I shall in no time forget that moment. We felt as if we had had in our souls a clear passing glimpse into this wondrous World.'

In these strange Oriental delineations the judicious reader will suspect that more may be meant than meets the ear. But who this teacher at Sais is, whether the personified Intellect of Mankind; and who this bright-faced golden-locked Child (Reason, Religious Faith?), that was 'to come again,' to conclude these lessons; and that awkward unwearied Man (Understanding?), that 'was so apt to break everything,' we have no data for determining, and would not undertake to conjecture with any certainty. We subjoin a passage from the second chapter, or section, entitled '*Nature*,' which, if possible, is of a still more surprising character than the first. After speaking at some length on the primeval views Man seems to have formed with regard to the external Universe, or 'the manifold Objects of his Senses;' and how in those times his mind had a peculiar unity, and only by Practice divided itself into separate faculties, as by Practice it may yet farther do, 'our Pupil' proceeds to describe the conditions requisite in an inquirer into Nature, observing, in conclusion, with regard to this,—

'No one, of a surety, wanders farther from the mark than he who fancies to himself that he already understands this marvellous Kingdom, and can, in few words, fathom its constitution, and everywhere find the right path. To no one, who has broken off, and made himself an Island, will insight rise of itself, nor even without toilsome effort. Only to children, or childlike men, who know not what they do, can this happen. Long, unwearied intercourse, free and wise Contemplation, attention to faint tokens and indications; an inward poet-life, practised senses, a simple and devout spirit: these are the essential requisites of a true Friend of Nature; without these no one can attain his wish. Not wise does it seem to attempt comprehending and understanding a Human World without full perfected Humanity. No talent must sleep; and if all are not alike active, all must be alert, and not oppressed and enervated. As we see a future Painter in the boy who fills every wall with sketches and variedly adds colour to figure; so we see a future Philosopher in him who restlessly traces and questions all natural things, pays heed to all, brings together whatever is remarkable, and rejoices when he has become master and possessor of a new phenomenon, of a new power and piece of knowledge.

'Now to Some it appears not at all worth while to follow out the endless divisions of Nature; and moreover a dangerous undertaking, without fruit and issue. As we can never reach, say they, the absolutely smallest grain of material bodies, never find their simplest compartments, since all magnitude loses itself, forwards and backwards, in infinitude; so likewise is it with the species of bodies and powers; here too one comes on new species, new combinations, new appearances, even to in-

finitude. These seem only to stop, continue they, when our diligence tires; and so it is spending precious time with idle contemplations and tedious enumerations; and this becomes at last a true delirium, a real vertigo over the horrid Deep. For Nature too remains, so far as we have yet come, ever a frightful Machine of Death: everywhere monstrous revolution, inexplicable vortices of movement; a kingdom of Devouring, of the maddest tyranny; a baleful Immense: the few light-points disclose but a so much the more appalling Night, and terrors of all sorts must palsy every observer. Like a saviour does Death stand by the hapless race of mankind; for without Death, the maddest were the happiest. And precisely this striving to fathom that gigantic Mechanism is already a draught towards the Deep, a commencing giddiness; for every excitement is an increasing whirl, which soon gains full mastery over its victim, and hurls him forward with it into the fearful Night. Here, say those lamenters, lies the crafty snare for man's understanding, which Nature everywhere seeks to annihilate as her greatest foe. Hail to that childlike ignorance and innocence of men, which kept them blind to the horrible perils that everywhere, like grim thunder-clouds, lay round their peaceful dwelling, and each moment were ready to rush down on them. Only inward disunion among the powers of Nature has preserved men hitherto; nevertheless, that great epoch cannot fail to arrive, when the whole family of mankind, by a grand universal Resolve, will snatch themselves from this sorrowful condition, from this frightful imprisonment; and by a voluntary Abdication of their terrestrial abode, redeem their race from this anguish, and seek refuge in a happier world, with their ancient Father. Thus might they end worthily; and prevent a necessary violent destruction; or a still more horrible degenerating into Beasts, by gradual dissolution of their thinking organs through Insanity. Intercourse with the powers of Nature, with animals, plants, rocks, storms and waves, must necessarily assimilate men to these objects; and this Assimilation, this Metamorphosis, and dissolution of the Divine and the Human, into ungovernable Forces, is even the Spirit of Nature, that frightfully voracious power: and is not all that we see even now a prey from Heaven, a great Ruin of former Glories, the Remains of a terrific Repast?

'Be it so, cry a more courageous Class; let our species maintain a stubborn, well-planned war of destruction with this same Nature, then. By slow poisons must we endeavour to subdue her. The Inquirer into Nature is a noble hero, who rushes into the open abyss for the deliverance of his fellow-citizens. Artists have already played her many a trick: do but continue in this course; get hold of the secret threads, and bring them to act against each other. Profit by these discords, that so in the end you may lead her, like that fire-breathing Bull, according to your pleasure. To you she must become obedient. Patience and Faith beseem the children of men. Distant Brothers are united with us for one object; the wheel of the Stars must become the cistern-wheel of our life, and then, by our slaves, we can build us a new Fairyland. With heart-

felt triumph let us look at her devastations, her tumults; she is selling herself to us, and every violence she will pay by a heavy penalty. In the inspiring feeling of our Freedom, let us live and die; here gushes forth the stream, which will one day overflow and subdue her; in it let us bathe, and refresh ourselves for new exploits. Hither the rage of the Monster does not reach; one drop of Freedom is sufficient to cripple her forever, and forever set limits to her havoc.

'They are right, say Several; here, or nowhere, lies the talisman. By the well of Freedom we sit and look; it is the grand magic Mirror, where the whole Creation images itself, pure and clear; in it do the tender Spirits and Forms of all Nature bathe; all chambers we here behold unlocked. What need have we toilsomely to wander over the troublous World of visible things? The purer World lies even in us, in this Well. Here discloses itself the true meaning of the great, many-coloured, complected Scene; and if full of these sights we return into Nature, all is well known to us, with certainty we distinguish every shape. We need not to inquire long; a light Comparison, a few strokes in the sand, are enough to inform us. Thus, for us, is the whole a great Writing, to which we have the key; and nothing comes to us unexpected, for the course of the great Horologe is known to us beforehand. It is only we that enjoy Nature with full senses, because she does not frighten us from our senses; because no fever-dreams oppress us, and serene consciousness makes us calm and confiding.

'They are *not* right, says an earnest Man to these latter. Can they not recognise in Nature the true impress of their own Selves? It is even they that consume themselves in wild hostility to Thought. They know not that this so-called Nature of theirs is a Sport of the Mind, a waste Fantasy of their Dream. Of a surety, it is for them a horrible Monster, a strange grotesque Shadow of their own Passions. The waking man looks without fear at this offspring of his lawless Imagination; for he knows that they are but vain Spectres of his weakness. He feels himself lord of the world: his *Me* hovers victorious over the Abyss; and will through Eternities hover aloft above that endless Vicissitude. Harmony is what his spirit strives to promulgate, to extend. He will even to infinitude grow more and more harmonious with himself and with his Creation; and at every step behold the all-efficiency of a high moral Order in the Universe, and what is purest of his *Me* come forth into brighter and brighter clearness. The significance of the World is Reason; for her sake is the World here; and when it is grown to be the arena of a childlike, expanding Reason, it will one day become the divine Image of her Activity, the scene of a genuine Church. Till then let man honour Nature as the Emblem of his own Spirit; the Emblem ennobling itself, along with him, to unlimited degrees. Let him, therefore, who would arrive at knowledge of Nature, train his moral sense, let him act and conceive in accordance with the noble Essence of his Soul; and as if of herself Nature will become open to him. Moral Action is that great and only Experiment, in which all riddles of the most manifold appear-

ances explain themselves. Whoso understands it, and in rigid sequence of Thought can lay it open, is forever Master of Nature.'[4]

'The Pupil,' it is added, 'listens with alarm to these conflicting voices.' If such was the case in half-supernatural Sais, it may well be much more so in mere sublunary London. Here again, however, in regard to these vaporous lucubrations, we can only imitate Jean Paul's Quintus Fixlein, who, it is said, in his elaborate *Catalogue of German Errors of the Press*, 'states 'that important inferences are to be drawn from it, and advises 'the reader to draw them.' Perhaps these wonderful paragraphs, which look, at this distance, so like chasms filled with mere sluggish mist, might prove valleys, with a clear stream and soft pastures, were we near at hand. For one thing, either Novalis, with Tieck and Schlegel at his back, are men in a state of derangement; or there is more in Heaven and Earth than has been dreamt of in our Philosophy. We may add that, in our view, this last Speaker, the 'earnest Man,' seems evidently to be Fichte; the first two Classes look like some sceptical or atheistic brood, unacquainted with Bacon's *Novum Organum*, or having, the First class at least, almost no faith in it. That theory of the human species ending by a universal simultaneous act of Suicide, will, to the more simple sort of readers, be new.

As farther and more directly illustrating Novalis's scientific views, we may here subjoin two short sketches, taken from another department of this Volume. To all who prosecute Philosophy, and take interest in its history and present aspects, they will not be without interest. The obscure parts of them are not perhaps unintelligible, but only obscure; which unluckily cannot, at all times, be helped in such cases:

'Common Logic is the Grammar of the higher Speech, that is, of Thought; it examines merely the *relations* of ideas to one another, the *Mechanics* of Thought, the pure Physiology of ideas. Now logical ideas stand related to one another, like words without thoughts. Logic occupies itself with the mere dead Body of the Science of Thinking.—Metaphysics, again, is the *Dynamics* of Thought; treats of the primary *Powers* of Thought; occupies itself with the mere Soul of the Science of Thinking. Metaphysical ideas stand related to one another, like thoughts without words. Men often wondered at the stubborn Incompletibility of these two Sciences; each followed its own business by itself; there was a want everywhere, nothing would suit rightly with either. From the very first, attempts were made to unite them, as everything about

[4] Bd. ii. s. 43-57.

them indicated relationship; but every attempt failed; the one or the other Science still suffered in these attempts, and lost its essential character. We had to abide by metaphysical Logic, and logical Metaphysic, but neither of them was as it should be. With Physiology and Psychology, with Mechanics and Chemistry, it fared no better. In the latter half of this Century there arose, with us Germans, a more violent commotion than ever; the hostile masses towered themselves up against each other more fiercely than heretofore; the fermentation was extreme; there followed powerful explosions. And now some assert that a real Compenetration has somewhere or other taken place; that the germ of a union has arisen, which will grow by degrees, and assimilate all to one indivisible form: that this principle of Peace is pressing out irresistibly on all sides, and that erelong there will be but one Science and one Spirit, as one Prophet and one God.'—

'The rude, discursive Thinker is the Scholastic (Schoolman Logician). The true Scholastic is a mystical Subtlist; out of logical Atoms he builds his Universe; he annihilates all living Nature, to put an Artifice of Thoughts (*Gedankenkunststück*, literally Conjuror's-trick of Thoughts) in its room. His aim is an infinite Automaton. Opposite to him is the rude, intuitive Poet: this is a mystical Macrologist: he hates rules and fixed form; a wild, violent life reigns instead of it in Nature; all is animate, no law; wilfulness and wonder everywhere. He is merely dynamical. Thus does the Philosophic Spirit arise at first, in altogether separate masses. In the *second* stage of culture these masses begin to come in contact, multifariously enough; and, as in the union of infinite Extremes, the Finite, the Limited arises, so here also arise "Eclectic Philosophers" without number; the time of misunderstanding begins. The most limited is, in this stage, the most important, the purest Philosopher of the second stage. This class occupies itself wholly with the actual, present world, in the strictest sense. The Philosophers of the first class look down with contempt on those of the second; say, they are a little of everything, and so nothing; hold their views as the results of weakness, as Inconsequentism. On the contrary, the second class, in their turn, pity the first; lay the blame on their visionary enthusiasm, which they say is absurd, even to insanity.

'If on the one hand the Scholastics and Alchemists seem to be utterly at variance, and the Eclectics on the other hand quite at one, yet, strictly examined, it is altogether the reverse. The former, in essentials, are indirectly of one opinion; namely, as regards the non-dependence and infinite character of Meditation, they both set out from the Absolute: whilst the Eclectic and limited sort are essentially at variance; and agree only in what is deduced. The former are infinite but uniform, the latter bounded but multiform; the former have genius, the latter talent; those have Ideas, these have knacks (*Handgriffe*); those are heads without hands, these are hands without heads. The *third* stage is for the Artist, who can be at once implement and genius. He finds that that primitive Separation in the absolute Philosophical Activities' (between the Scho-

lastic, and the "rude, intuitive Poet") 'is a deeper-lying Separation in his own Nature; which Separation indicates, by its existence as such, the possibility of being adjusted, of being joined: he finds that, heterogeneous as these Activities are, there is yet a faculty in him of passing from the one to the other, of changing his *polarity* at will. He discovers in them, therefore, necessary members of his spirit; he observes that both must be united in some common Principle. He infers that Eclecticism is nothing but the imperfect defective employment of this Principle. It becomes——'

——But we need not struggle farther, wringing a significance out of these mysterious words: in delineating the genuine Transcendentalist, or 'Philosopher of the third stage,' properly speaking *the* Philosopher, Novalis ascends into regions whither few readers would follow him. It may be observed here that British Philosophy, tracing it from Duns Scotus to Dugald Stewart, has now gone through the first and second of these 'stages,' the Scholastic and the Eclectic, and in considerable honour. With our amiable Professor Stewart, than whom no man, not Cicero himself, was ever more entirely Eclectic, that second or Eclectic class may be considered as having terminated; and now Philosophy is at a stand among us, or rather there is now no Philosophy visible in these Islands. It remains to be seen, whether we also are to have our 'third stage;' and how that new and highest 'class' will demean itself here. The French Philosophers seem busy studying Kant, and writing of him: but we rather imagine Novalis would pronounce them still only in the Eclectic stage. He says afterwards, that 'all Eclectics are essentially 'and at bottom sceptics; the more comprehensive, the more 'sceptical.'

These two passages have been extracted from a large series of *Fragments*, which, under the three divisions of Philosophical, Critical, Moral, occupy the greatest part of Volume Second. They are fractions, as we hinted above, of that grand 'encyclopedical work' which Novalis had planned. Friedrich Schlegel is said to be the selector of those published here. They come before us without note or comment; worded for the most part in very unusual phraseology; and without repeated and most patient investigation, seldom yield any significance, or rather we should say, often yield a false one. A few of the clearest we have selected for insertion: whether the reader will think them 'Pollen of Flowers,' or a baser kind of dust, we shall not predict. We give them in a miscellaneous shape; overlooking

those classifications which, even in the text, are not and could not be very rigidly adhered to.

'Philosophy can bake no bread; but she can procure for us God, Freedom, Immortality. Which, then, is more practical, Philosophy or Economy?—

'Philosophy is properly Home-sickness; the wish to be everywhere at home.—

'We are near awakening when we dream that we dream.—

'The true philosophical Act is annihilation of self (*Selbsttödtung*); this is the real beginning of all Philosophy; all requisites for being a Disciple of Philosophy point hither. This Act alone corresponds to all the conditions and characteristics of transcendental conduct.—

'To become properly acquainted with a truth, we must first have disbelieved it, and disputed against it.—

'Man is the higher Sense of our Planet; the star which connects it with the upper world; the eye which it turns towards Heaven.—

'Life is a disease of the spirit; a working incited by Passion. Rest is peculiar to the spirit.—

'Our life is no Dream, but it may and will perhaps become one.—

'What is Nature? An encyclopedical, systematic Index or Plan of our Spirit. Why will we content us with the mere catalogue of our Treasures? Let us contemplate them ourselves, and in all ways elaborate and use them.—

'If our Bodily Life is a burning, our Spiritual Life is a being burnt, a Combustion (or, is precisely the inverse the case?); Death, therefore, perhaps a Change of Capacity.—

'Sleep is for the inhabitants of Planets only. In another time, Man will sleep and wake continually at once. The greater part of our Body, of our Humanity itself, yet sleeps a deep sleep.—

'There is but one Temple in the World; and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than this high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch Heaven, when we lay our hand on a human body.—

'Man is a Sun; his Senses are the Planets.—

'Man has ever expressed some symbolical Philosophy of his Being in his Works and Conduct; he announces himself and his Gospel of Nature; he is the Messiah of Nature.—

'Plants are Children of the Earth; we are Children of the Æther. Our Lungs are properly our Root; we live, when we breathe; we begin our life with breathing.—

'Nature is an Æolian Harp, a musical instrument; whose tones again are keys to higher strings in us.—

'Every beloved object is the centre of a Paradise.—

'The first Man is the first Spirit-seer; all appears to him as Spirit. What are children, but first men? The fresh gaze of the Child is richer in significance than the forecasting of the most indubitable Seer.—

'It depends only on the weakness of our organs and of our self-excitement (*Selbstberührung*), that we do not see ourselves in a Fairy-world. All Fabulous Tales (*Mährchen*) are merely dreams of that home-world, which is everywhere and nowhere. The higher powers in us, which one day as Genies, shall fulfil our will,[5] are, for the present, Muses, which refresh us on our toilsome course with sweet remembrances.—

'Man consists in Truth. If he exposes Truth, he exposes himself. If he betrays Truth, he betrays himself. We speak not here of Lies, but of acting against Conviction.—

'A character is a completely fashioned will (*vollkommen gebildeter Wille*).—

'There is, properly speaking, no Misfortune in the world. Happiness and Misfortune stand in continual balance. Every Misfortune is, as it were, the obstruction of a stream, which, after overcoming this obstruction, but bursts through with the greater force.—

'The ideal of Morality has no more dangerous rival than the ideal of highest Strength, of most powerful life; which also has been named (very falsely as it was there meant) the ideal of poetic greatness. It is the maximum of the savage; and has, in these times, gained, precisely among the greatest weaklings, very many proselytes. By this ideal, man becomes a Beast-Spirit, a Mixture; whose brutal wit has, for weaklings, a brutal power of attraction.—

'The spirit of Poesy is the morning light, which makes the Statue of Memnon sound.—

'The division of Philosopher and Poet is only apparent, and to the disadvantage of both. It is a sign of disease, and of a sickly constitution.—

'The true Poet is all-knowing; he is an actual world in miniature.—

'Klopstock's works appear, for the most part, free Translations of an unknown Poet, by a very talented but unpoetical Philologist.—

'Goethe is an altogether practical Poet. He is in his works what the English are in their wares: highly simple, neat, convenient and durable. He has done in German Literature what Wedgwood did in English Manufacture. He has, like the English, a natural turn for Economy, and a noble Taste acquired by Understanding. Both these are very compatible, and have a near affinity in the chemical sense. * *—*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* may be called throughout prosaic and modern. The Romantic sinks to ruin, the Poesy of Nature, the Wonderful. The Book treats merely of common worldly things: Nature and Mysticism

[5] Novalis's ideas, on what has been called the 'perfectibility of man,' ground themselves on his peculiar views of the constitution of material and spiritual Nature, and are of the most original and extraordinary character. With our utmost effort, we should despair of communicating other than a quite false notion of them. He asks, for instance, with scientific gravity: Whether any one, that recollects the first kind glance of her he loved, can doubt the possibility of *Magic*?

are altogether forgotten. It is a poetised civic and household History; the Marvellous is expressly treated therein as imagination and enthusiasm. Artistic Atheism is the spirit of the Book. * * * It is properly a *Candide*, directed against Poetry: the Book is highly unpoetical in respect of spirit, poetical as the dress and body of it are. * * * The introduction of Shakspeare has almost a tragic effect. The hero retards the triumph of the Gospel of Economy; and economical Nature is finally the true and only remaining one.—

'When we speak of the aim and Art observable in Shakspeare's works, we must not forget that Art belongs to Nature; that it is, so to speak, self-viewing, self-imitating, self-fashioning Nature. The Art of a well-developed genius is far different from the Artfulness of the Understanding, of the merely reasoning mind. Shakspeare was no calculator, no learned thinker; he was a mighty, many-gifted soul, whose feelings and works, like products of Nature, bear the stamp of the same spirit; and in which the last and deepest of observers will still find new harmonies with the infinite structure of the Universe; concurrences with later ideas, affinities with the higher powers and senses of man. They are emblematic, have many meanings, are simple and inexhaustible, like products of Nature; and nothing more unsuitable could be said of them than that they are works of Art, in that narrow mechanical acceptation of the word.'

The reader understands that we offer these specimens not as the best to be found in Novalis's *Fragments*, but simply as the most intelligible. Far stranger and deeper things there are, could we hope to make them in the smallest degree understood. But in examining and reëxamining many of his *Fragments*, we find ourselves carried into more complex, more subtle regions of thought than any we are elsewhere acquainted with: here we cannot always find our own latitude and longitude, sometimes not even approximate to finding them; much less teach others such a secret.

What has been already quoted may afford some knowledge of Novalis, in the characters of Philosopher and Critic: there is one other aspect under which it would be still more curious to view and exhibit him, but still more difficult,—we mean that of his Religion. Novalis nowhere specially records his creed, in these Writings: he many times expresses, or implies, a zealous, heartfelt belief in the Christian system; yet with such adjuncts and coexisting persuasions, as to us might seem rather surprising. One or two more of these his Aphorisms, relative to this subject, we shall cite, as likely to be better than any description of ours. The whole Essay at the end of Volume

First, entitled *Die Christenheit oder Europa* (Christianity or Europe) is also well worthy of study, in this as in many other points of view.

'Religion contains infinite sadness. If we are to love God, he must be in distress (*hülfsbedürftig*, help-needing). In how far is this condition answered in Christianity?—

'Spinoza is a God-intoxicated man (*Gott-trunkener Mensch*).—

'Is the Devil, as Father of Lies, himself but a necessary Illusion?—

'The Catholic Religion is to a certain extent applied Christianity. Fichte's Philosophy too is perhaps applied Christianity.—

'Can Miracles work Conviction? Or is not real Conviction, this highest function of our soul and personality, the only true God-announcing Miracle?

'The Christian Religion is especially remarkable, moreover, as it so decidedly lays claim to mere good-will in Man, to his essential Temper, and values this independently of all Culture and Manifestation. It stands in opposition to Science and to Art, and *properly to Enjoyment.*[6]

'Its origin is with the common people. It inspires the great majority of the *limited* in this Earth.

'It is the Light that begins to shine in the Darkness.

'It is the root of *all Democracy*, the highest Fact in the Rights of Man (*die höchste Thatsache der Popularität*).

'Its unpoetical exterior, its resemblance to a modern family-picture, *seems only to be lent it.*[6]

'Martyrs are spiritual heroes. Christ was the greatest martyr of our species; through him has martyrdom become infinitely significant and holy.—

'The Bible begins nobly, with Paradise, the symbol of youth; and concludes with the Eternal Kingdom, the Holy City. Its two main divisions, also, are genuine grand-historical divisions (*ächt gross-historisch*). For in every grand-historical compartment (*Glied*), the grand history must lie, as it were, symbolically re-created (*verjüngt*, made young again). The beginning of the New Testament is the second higher Fall (the Atonement of the Fall), and the commencement of the new Period. The history of every individual man should be a Bible. Christ is a new Adam. A Bible is the highest problem of Authorship.—

'As yet there is no Religion. You must first make a Seminary (*Bildungs-schule*) of genuine Religion. Think ye that there is Religion? Religion has to be made and produced (*gemacht und hervorgebracht*) by the union of a number of persons.'

Hitherto our readers have seen nothing of Novalis in his character of Poet, properly so called; the *Pupils at Sais* being fully more of a scientific than poetic nature. As hinted above, we do not account his gifts in this latter province as of the

[6] Italics also in the text.

first, or even of a high order; unless, indeed, it be true, as he himself maintains, that 'the distinction of Poet and Philosopher is apparent only, and to the injury of both.' In his professedly poetical compositions there is an indubitable prolixity, a degree of languor, not weakness but sluggishness; the meaning is too much diluted; and diluted, we might say, not in a rich, lively, varying music, as we find in Tieck, for example; but rather in a low-voiced, not unmelodious monotony, the deep hum of which is broken only at rare intervals, though sometimes by tones of purest and almost spiritual softness. We here allude chiefly to his unmetrical pieces, his prose fictions: indeed the metrical are few in number; for the most part, on religious subjects; and in spite of a decided truthfulness both in feeling and word, seem to bespeak no great skill or practice in that form of composition. In his prose style he may be accounted happier; he aims in general at simplicity, and a certain familiar expressiveness; here and there, in his more elaborate passages, especially in his *Hymns to the Night*, he has reminded us of Herder.

These *Hymns to the Night*, it will be remembered, were written shortly after the death of his mistress: in that period of deep sorrow, or rather of holy deliverance from sorrow. Novalis himself regarded them as his most finished productions. They are of a strange, veiled, almost enigmatical character; nevertheless, more deeply examined, they appear nowise without true poetic worth; there is a vastness, an immensity of idea; a still solemnity reigns in them, a solitude almost as of extinct worlds. Here and there too some light-beam visits us in the void deep; and we cast a glance, clear and wondrous, into the secrets of that mysterious soul. A full commentary on the *Hymns to the Night* would be an exposition of Novalis's whole theological and moral creed; for it lies recorded there, though symbolically, and in lyric, not in didactic language. We have translated the Third, as the shortest and simplest; imitating its light, half-measured style, above all deciphering its vague deep-laid sense, as accurately as we could. By the word 'Night,' it will be seen, Novalis means much more than the common opposite of Day. 'Light' seems, in these poems, to shadow forth our terrestrial life; Night the primeval and celestial life:

'Once when I was shedding bitter tears, when dissolved in pain my

Hope had melted away, and I stood solitary by the grave that in its dark narrow space concealed the Form of my life; solitary as no other had been; chased by unutterable anguish; powerless; one thought and that of misery;—here now as I looked round for help; forward could not go, nor backward, but clung to a transient extinguished Life with unutterable longing;—lo, from the azure distance, down from the heights of my old Blessedness, came a chill breath of Dusk, and suddenly the band of Birth, the fetter of Life was snapped asunder. Vanishes the Glory of Earth, and with it my Lamenting; rushes together the infinite Sadness into a new unfathomable World: thou Night's-inspiration, Slumber of Heaven, camest over me; the scene rose gently aloft; over the scene hovered my enfranchised new-born spirit; to a cloud of dust that grave changed itself; through the cloud I beheld the transfigured features of my Beloved. In her eyes lay Eternity; I clasped her hand, and my tears became a glittering indissoluble chain. Centuries of Ages moved away into the distance, like thunder-clouds. On her neck I wept, for this new life, enrapturing tears.—It was my first, only Dream; and ever since then do I feel this changeless everlasting faith in the Heaven of Night, and its Sun my Beloved.'

What degree of critical satisfaction, what insight into the grand crisis of Novalis's spiritual history, which seems to be here shadowed forth, our readers may derive from this Third *Hymn to the Night*, we shall not pretend to conjecture. Meanwhile, it were giving them a false impression of the Poet, did we leave him here; exhibited only under his more mystic aspects: as if his Poetry were exclusively a thing of Allegory, dwelling amid Darkness and Vacuity, far from all paths of ordinary mortals and their thoughts. Novalis can write in the most common style, as well as in this most uncommon one; and there too not without originality. By far the greater part of his First Volume is occupied with a Romance, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, written, so far as it goes, much in the everyday manner; we have adverted the less to it, because we nowise reckoned it among his most remarkable compositions. Like many of the others, it has been left as a Fragment; nay, from the account Tieck gives of its ulterior plan, and how from the solid prose world of the First part, this 'Apotheosis of Poetry' was to pass, in the Second, into a mythical, fairy and quite fantastic world, critics have doubted whether, strictly speaking, it *could* have been completed. From this work we select two passages, as specimens of Novalis's manner in the more common style of composition; premising, which in this one instance we are entitled to do, that whatever excellence they may have

will be universally appreciable. The first is the introduction to the whole Narrative, as it were the text of the whole; the 'Blue Flower' there spoken of being Poetry, the real object, passion and vocation of young Heinrich, which, through manifold adventures, exertions and sufferings, he is to seek and find. His history commences thus:

'The old people were already asleep; the clock was beating its monotonous tick on the wall; the wind blustered over the rattling windows; by turns, the chamber was lighted by the sheen of the moon. The young man lay restless in his bed; and thought of the stranger and his stories. "Not the treasures is it," said he to himself, "that have awakened in me so unspeakable a desire; far from me is all covetousness; but the Blue Flower is what I long to behold. It lies incessantly in my heart, and I can think and fancy of nothing else. Never did I feel so before: it is as if, till now, I had been dreaming, or as if sleep had carried me into another world; for in the world I used to live in, who troubled himself about flowers? Such wild passion for a Flower was never heard of there. But whence could that stranger have come? None of us ever saw such a man; yet I know not how I alone was so caught with his discourse: the rest heard the very same, yet none seems to mind it. And then that I cannot even speak of my strange condition! I feel such rapturous contentment; and only then when I have not the Flower rightly before my eyes, does so deep, heartfelt an eagerness come over me: these things no one will or can believe. I could fancy I were mad, if I did not see, did not think with such perfect clearness; since that day, all is far better known to me. I have heard tell of ancient times; how animals and trees and rocks used to speak with men. This is even my feeling: as if they were on the point of breaking out, and I could see in them, what they wished to say to me. There must be many a word which I know not; did I know more, I could better comprehend these matters. Once I liked dancing; now I had rather think to the music."—The young man lost himself, by degrees, in sweet fancies, and fell asleep. He dreamed first of immeasurable distances, and wild unknown regions. He wandered over seas with incredible speed; strange animals he saw; he lived with many varieties of men, now in war, in wild tumult, now in peaceful huts. He was taken captive, and fell into the lowest wretchedness. All emotions rose to a height as yet unknown to him. He lived through an infinitely variegated life; died and came back; loved to the highest passion, and then again was forever parted from his loved one.

'At length towards morning, as the dawn broke up without, his spirit also grew stiller, the images grew clearer and more permanent. It seemed to him he was walking alone in a dark wood. Only here and there did day glimmer through the green net. Ere long he came to a rocky chasm, which mounted upwards. He had to climb over many crags, which some former stream had rolled down. The higher he came,

the lighter grew the wood. At last he arrived at a little meadow, which lay on the declivity of the mountain. Beyond the meadow rose a high cliff, at the foot of which he observed an opening, that seemed to be the entrance of a passage hewn in the rock. The passage led him easily on, for some time, to a great subterranean expanse, out of which from afar a bright gleam was visible. On entering, he perceived a strong beam of light, which sprang as if from a fountain to the roof of the cave, and sprayed itself into innumerable sparks, which collected below in a great basin: the beam glanced like kindled gold: not the faintest noise was to be heard, a sacred silence encircled the glorious sight. He approached the basin, which waved and quivered with infinite hues. The walls of the cave were coated with this fluid, which was not hot but cool, and on the walls threw out a faint bluish light. He dipt his hand in the basin, and wetted his lips. It was as if the breath of a spirit went through him; and he felt himself in his inmost heart strengthened and refreshed. An irresistible desire seized him to bathe; he undressed himself and stept into the basin. He felt as if a sunset cloud were floating round him; a heavenly emotion streamed over his soul; in deep pleasure innumerable thoughts strove to blend within him; new, unseen images arose, which also melted together, and became visible beings around him; and every wave of that lovely element pressed itself on him like a soft bosom. The flood seemed a Spirit of Beauty, which from moment to moment was taking form round the youth.

'Intoxicated with rapture, and yet conscious of every impression, he floated softly down that glittering stream, which flowed out from the basin into the rocks. A sort of sweet slumber fell upon him, in which he dreamed indescribable adventures, and out of which a new light awoke him. He found himself on a soft sward at the margin of a spring, which welled out into the air, and seemed to dissipate itself there. Dark-blue rocks, with many-coloured veins, rose at some distance; the day-light which encircled him was clearer and milder than the common; the sky was black-blue, and altogether pure. But what attracted him infinitely most was a high, light-blue Flower, which stood close by the spring, touching it with its broad glittering leaves. Round it stood innumerable flowers of all colours, and the sweetest perfume filled the air. He saw nothing but the Blue Flower; and gazed on it long with nameless tenderness. At last he was for approaching, when all at once it began to move and change; the leaves grew more resplendent, and clasped themselves round the waxing stem; the Flower bent itself towards him; and the petals showed like a blue spreading ruff, in which hovered a lovely face. His sweet astonishment at this transformation was increasing,—when suddenly his mother's voice awoke him, and he found himself in the house of his parents, which the morning sun was already gilding.'

Our next and last extract is likewise of a dream. Young Heinrich with his mother travels a long journey to see his

grandfather at Augsburg; converses, on the way, with merchants, miners and red-cross warriors (for it is in the time of the Crusades); and soon after his arrival falls immeasurably in love with Matilda, the Poet Klingsohr's daughter, whose face was that fairest one he had seen in his old vision of the Blue Flower. Matilda, it would appear, is to be taken from him by death (as Sophie was from Novalis): meanwhile, dreading no such event, Heinrich abandons himself with full heart to his new emotions:

'He went to the window. The choir of the Stars stood in the deep heaven; and in the east a white gleam announced the coming day.

'Full of rapture, Heinrich exclaimed: "You, ye everlasting Stars, ye silent wanderers, I call you to witness my sacred oath. For Matilda will I live, and eternal faith shall unite my heart and hers. For me too the morn of an everlasting day is dawning. The night is by: to the rising Sun, I kindle myself as a sacrifice that will never be extinguished."

'Heinrich was heated; and not till late, towards morning, did he fall asleep. In strange dreams the thoughts of his soul embodied themselves. A deep-blue river gleamed from the plain. On its smooth surface floated a bark; Matilda was sitting there, and steering. She was adorned with garlands; was singing a simple Song, and looking over to him with fond sadness. His bosom was full of anxiety. He knew not why. The sky was clear, the stream calm. Her heavenly countenance was mirrored in the waves. All at once the bark began to whirl. He called earnestly to her. She smiled, and laid down her oar in the boat, which continued whirling. An unspeakable terror took hold of him. He dashed into the stream; but he could not get forward; the water carried him. She beckoned, she seemed as if she wished to say something to him; the bark was filling with water; yet she smiled with unspeakable affection, and looked cheerfully into the vortex. All at once it drew her in. A faint breath rippled over the stream, which flowed on as calm and glittering as before. His horrid agony robbed him of consciousness. His heart ceased beating. On returning to himself, he was again on dry land. It seemed as if he had floated far. It was a strange region. He knew not what had passed with him. His heart was gone. Unthinking he walked deeper into the country. He felt inexpressibly weary. A little well gushed from a hill; it sounded like perfect bells. With his hand he lifted some drops, and wetted his parched lips. Like a sick dream, lay the frightful event behind him. Farther and farther he walked; flowers and trees spoke to him. He felt so well, so at home in the scene. Then he heard that simple Song again. He ran after the sounds. Suddenly some one held him by the clothes. "Dear Henry," cried a well-known voice. He looked round, and Matilda clasped him in her arms. "Why didst thou run from me, dear heart?" said she, breathing deep: "I could scarcely overtake thee."

Heinrich wept. He pressed her to him. "Where is the river?" cried he in tears.—"Seest thou not its blue waves above us?" He looked up, and the blue river was flowing softly over their heads. "Where are we, dear Matilda?"—"With our Fathers."—"Shall we stay together?"—"Forever," answered she, pressing her lips to his, and so clasping him that she could not again quit hold. She put a wondrous secret Word in his mouth, and it pierced through all his being. He was about to repeat it, when his Grandfather called, and he awoke. He would have given his life to remember that Word.'

This image of Death, and of the River being the Sky in that other and eternal country, seems to us a fine and touching one: there is in it a trace of that simple sublimity, that soft still pathos, which are characteristics of Novalis, and doubtless the highest of his specially poetic gifts.

But on these, and what other gifts and deficiencies pertain to him, we can no farther insist: for now, after such multifarious quotations, and more or less stinted commentaries, we must consider our little enterprise in respect of Novalis to have reached its limits; to be, if not completed, concluded. Our reader has heard him largely; on a great variety of topics, selected and exhibited here in such manner as seemed the fittest for our object, and with a true wish on our part, that what little judgment was in the mean while to be formed of such a man might be a fair and honest one. Some of the passages we have translated will appear obscure; others, we hope, are not without symptoms of a wise and deep meaning; the rest may excite wonder, which wonder again it will depend on each reader for himself, whether he turn to right account or to wrong account, whether he entertain as the parent of Knowledge, or as the daughter of Ignorance. For the great body of readers, we are aware, there can be little profit in Novalis, who rather employs our time than helps us to kill it; for such any farther study of him would be unadvisable. To others again, who prize Truth as the end of all reading, especially to that class who cultivate moral science as the development of purest and highest Truth, we can recommend the perusal and reperusal of Novalis with almost perfect confidence. If they feel, with us, that the most profitable employment any book can give them, is to study honestly some earnest, deep-minded, truth-loving Man, to work their way into his manner of thought, till they see the world with his eyes, feel as he felt and judge as he judged, neither believing nor denying, till they can in some measure so feel

and judge,—then we may assert that few books known to us are more worthy of their attention than this. They will find it, if we mistake not, an unfathomed mine of philosophical ideas, where the keenest intellect may have occupation enough; and in such occupation, without looking farther, reward enough. All this, if the reader proceed on candid principles; if not, it will be all otherwise. To no man, so much as to Novalis is that famous motto applicable:

Leser, wie gefall' ich Dir?
Leser, wie gefällst Du mir?

Reader, how likest thou me?
Reader, how like I thee?

For the rest, it were but a false proceeding did we attempt any formal character of Novalis in this place; did we pretend with such means as ours to reduce that extraordinary nature under common formularies; and in few words sum-up the net total of his worth and worthlessness. We have repeatedly expressed our own imperfect knowledge of the matter, and our entire despair of bringing even an approximate picture of it before readers so foreign to him. The kind words, 'amiable enthusiast,' 'poetic dreamer,' or the unkind ones, 'German mystic,' 'crackbrained rhapsodist,' are easily spoken and written; but would avail little in this instance. If we are not altogether mistaken, Novalis cannot be ranged under any one of these noted categories; but belongs to a higher and much less known one, the significance of which is perhaps also worth studying, at all events will not till after long study become clear to us.

Meanwhile let the reader accept some vague impressions of ours on this subject, since we have no fixed judgment to offer him. We might say, that the chief excellence we have remarked in Novalis is his to us truly wonderful subtlety of intellect; his power of intense abstraction, of pursuing the deepest and most evanescent ideas through their thousand complexities, as it were, with lynx vision, and to the very limits of human Thought. He was well skilled in mathematics, and, as we can easily believe, fond of that science; but his is a far finer species of endowment than any required in mathematics, where the mind, from the very beginning of *Euclid* to the end of *Laplace*, is assisted with visible symbols, with safe *implements* for thinking; nay, at least in what is called the higher mathematics, has often

little more than a mechanical superintendence to exercise over these. This power of abstract meditation, when it is so sure and clear as we sometimes find it with Novalis, is a much higher and rarer one; its element is not mathematics, but that *Mathesis*, of which it has been said many a Great Calculist has not even a notion. In this power, truly, so far as logical and not moral power is concerned, lies the summary of all Philosophic talent: which talent, accordingly, we imagine Novalis to have possessed in a very high degree; in a higher degree than almost any other modern writer we have met with.

His chief fault, again, figures itself to us as a certain undue softness, a want of rapid energy; something which we might term *passiveness* extending both over his mind and his character. There is a tenderness in Novalis, a purity, a clearness, almost as of a woman; but he has not, at least not at all in that degree, the emphasis and resolute force of a man. Thus, in his poetical delineations, as we complained above, he is too diluted and diffuse; not verbose properly; not so much abounding in superfluous words as in superfluous circumstances, which indeed is but a degree better. In his philosophical speculations, we feel as if, under a different form, the same fault were now and then manifested. Here again, he seems to us, in one sense, too languid, too passive. He *sits*, we might say, among the rich, fine, thousandfold combinations, which his mind almost of itself presents him; but, perhaps, he shows too little activity in the process, is too lax in separating the true from the doubtful, is not even at the trouble to express his truth with any laborious accuracy. With his stillness, with his deep love of Nature, his mild, lofty, spiritual tone of contemplation, he comes before us in a sort of Asiatic character, almost like our ideal of some antique Gymnosophist, and with the weakness as well as the strength of an Oriental. However, it should be remembered that his works both poetical and philosophical, as we now see them, appear under many disadvantages; altogether immature, and not as doctrines and delineations, but as the rude draught of such; in which, had they been completed, much was to have changed its shape, and this fault, with many others, might have disappeared. It may be, therefore, that this is only a superficial fault, or even only the appearance of a fault, and has its origin in these circumstances, and in our imperfect understanding of him. In personal and bodily habits, at least,

Novalis appears to have been the opposite of inert; we hear expressly of his quickness and vehemence of movement.

In regard to the character of his genius, or rather perhaps of his literary significance, and the form under which he displayed his genius, Tieck thinks he may be likened to Dante. 'For him,' says he, 'it had become the most natural disposition to regard the commonest and nearest as a wonder, and the strange, the supernatural as something common; men's every-day life itself lay round him like a wondrous fable, and those regions which the most dream of or doubt of as of a thing distant, incomprehensible, were for him a beloved home. Thus did he, uncorrupted by examples, find out for himself a new method of delineation: and, in his multiplicity of meaning; in his view of Love, and his belief in Love, as at once his Instructor, his Wisdom, his Religion; in this, too, that a single grand incident of life, and one deep sorrow and bereavement grew to be the essence of his Poetry and Contemplation, —he, alone among the moderns, resembles the lofty Dante; and sings us, like him, an unfathomable mystic song, far different from that of many imitators, who think to put on mysticism and put it off, like a piece of dress.' Considering the tendency of his poetic endeavours, as well as the general spirit of his philosophy, this flattering comparison may turn out to be better founded than at first sight it seems to be. Nevertheless, were we required to illustrate Novalis in this way, which at all times must be a very loose one, we should incline rather to call him the German Pascal than the German Dante. Between Pascal and Novalis, a lover of such analogies might trace not a few points of resemblance. Both are of the purest, most affectionate moral nature; both of a high, fine, discursive intellect; both are mathematicians and naturalists, yet occupy themselves chiefly with Religion; nay, the best writings of both are left in the shape of 'Thoughts,' materials of a grand scheme, which each of them, with the views peculiar to his age, had planned, we may say, for the furtherance of Religion, and which neither of them lived to execute. Nor in all this would it fail to be carefully remarked, that Novalis was not the French but the *German* Pascal; and from the intellectual habits of the one and the other, many national contrasts and conclusions might be drawn; which we leave to those that have a taste for such parallels.

We have thus endeavoured to communicate some views not of what is vulgarly called, but of what *is* a German Mystic; to afford English readers a few glimpses into his actual household establishment, and show them by their own inspection how he lives and works. We have done it, moreover, not in the style of derision, which would have been so easy, but in that of serious inquiry, which seemed so much more profitable. For this we anticipate not censure, but thanks from our readers. Mysticism, whatever it may be, should, like other actually existing things, be understood in well-informed minds. We have observed, indeed, that the old-established laugh on this subject has been getting rather hollow of late; and seems as if erelong it would in a great measure die away. It appears to us that, in England, there is a distinct spirit of tolerant and sober investigation abroad in regard to this and other kindred matters; a persuasion, fast spreading wider and wider, that the plummet of French or Scotch Logic, excellent, nay indispensable as it is for surveying all coasts and harbours, will absolutely not sound the deep-seas of human Inquiry; and that many a Voltaire and Hume, well-gifted and highly meritorious men, were far wrong in reckoning that when their six-hundred fathoms were out, they had reached the bottom, which, as in the Atlantic, may lie unknown miles lower. Six-hundred fathoms is the longest, and a most valuable nautical line: but many men sound with six and fewer fathoms, and arrive at precisely the same conclusion.

'The day will come,' said Lichtenberg, in bitter irony, 'when 'the belief in God will be like that in nursery Spectres;' or, as Jean Paul has it, 'Of the World will be made a World-Machine, 'of the Æther a Gas, of God a Force, and of the Second World '—a Coffin.' We rather think, such a day will *not* come. At all events, while the battle is still waging, and that Coffin-and-Gas Philosophy has not yet secured itself with tithes and penal statutes, let there be free scope for Mysticism, or whatever else honestly opposes it. A fair field and no favour, and the right *will* prosper! 'Our present time,' says Jean Paul elsewhere, 'is 'indeed a criticising and critical time, hovering betwixt the 'wish and the inability to believe; a chaos of conflicting times: 'but even a chaotic world must have its centre, and revolution 'round that centre; there *is* no pure entire Confusion, but all 'such presupposes its opposite, before it can begin.'

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.[1]

[1829.]

It is no very good symptom either of nations or individuals, that they deal much in vaticination. Happy men are full of the present, for its bounty suffices them; and wise men also, for its duties engage them. Our grand business undoubtedly is, not to *see* what lies dimly at a distance, but to *do* what lies clearly at hand.

> Know'st thou *Yesterday*, its aim and reason;
> Work'st thou well *Today*, for worthy things?
> Calmly wait the *Morrow's* hidden season,
> Need'st not fear what hap soe'er it brings.

But man's 'large discourse of reason' *will* look 'before and after;' and, impatient of the 'ignorant present time,' will indulge in anticipation far more than profits him. Seldom can the unhappy be persuaded that the evil of the day is sufficient for it; and the ambitious will not be content with present splendour, but paints yet more glorious triumphs, on the cloud-curtain of the future.

The case, however, is still worse with nations. For here the prophets are not one, but many; and each incites and confirms the other; so that the fatidical fury spreads wider and wider, till at last even Saul must join in it. For there is still a real magic in the action and reaction of minds on one another. The casual deliration of a few becomes, by this mysterious reverberation, the frenzy of many; men lose the use, not only of their understandings, but of their bodily senses; while the most obdurate unbelieving hearts melt, like the rest, in the furnace where all are cast as victims and as fuel. It is grievous to think, that this noble omnipotence of Sympathy has been so

[1] Edinburgh Review, No. 98.

rarely the Aaron's-rod of Truth and Virtue, and so often the Enchanter's-rod of Wickedness and Folly! No solitary miscreant, scarcely any solitary maniac, would venture on such actions and imaginations, as large communities of sane men have, in such circumstances, entertained as sound wisdom. Witness long scenes of the French Revolution, in these late times! Levity is no protection against such visitations, nor the utmost earnestness of character. The New-England Puritan burns witches, wrestles for months with the horrors of Satan's invisible world, and all ghastly phantasms, the daily and hourly precursors of the Last Day; then suddenly bethinks him that he is frantic, weeps bitterly, prays contritely, and the history of that gloomy season lies behind him like a frightful dream.

Old England too has had her share of such frenzies and panics; though happily, like other old maladies, they have grown milder of late: and since the days of Titus Oates have mostly passed without loss of men's lives; or indeed without much other loss than that of reason, for the time, in the sufferers. In this mitigated form, however, the distemper is of pretty regular recurrence; and may be reckoned on at intervals, like other natural visitations; so that reasonable men deal with it, as the Londoners do with their fogs,—go cautiously out into the groping crowd, and patiently carry lanterns at noon; knowing, by a well-grounded faith, that the sun is still in existence, and will one day reappear. How often have we heard, for the last fifty years, that the country was wrecked, and fast sinking; whereas, up to this date, the country is entire and afloat! The 'State in Danger' is a condition of things, which we have witnessed a hundred times; and as for the Church, it has seldom been out of 'danger' since we can remember it.

All men are aware that the present is a crisis of this sort; and why it has become so. The repeal of the Test Acts, and then of the Catholic disabilities, has struck many of their admirers with an indescribable astonishment. Those things seemed fixed and immovable; deep as the foundations of the world; and lo, in a moment they have vanished, and their place knows them no more! Our worthy friends mistook the slumbering Leviathan for an island; often as they had been assured, that Intolerance was, and could be nothing but a Monster; and so, mooring under the lee, they had anchored comfortably in his scaly rind, thinking to take good cheer; as for some space

they did. But now their Leviathan has suddenly dived under; and they can no longer be fastened in the stream of time; but must drift forward on it, even like the rest of the world: no very appalling fate, we think, could they but understand it; which, however, they will not yet, for a season. Their little island is gone; sunk deep amid confused eddies; and what is left worth caring for in the universe? What is it to them that the great continents of the earth are still standing; and the polestar and all our loadstars, in the heavens, still shining and eternal? Their cherished little haven is gone, and they will not be comforted! And therefore, day after day, in all manner of periodical or perennial publications, the most lugubrious predictions are sent forth. The King has virtually abdicated; the Church is a widow, without jointure; public principle is gone; private honesty is going; society, in short, is fast falling in pieces; and a time of unmixed evil is come on us.

At such a period, it was to be expected that the rage of prophecy should be more than usually excited. Accordingly, the Millennarians have come forth on the right hand, and the Millites on the left. The Fifth-monarchy men prophesy from the Bible, and the Utilitarians from Bentham. The one announces that the last of the seals is to be opened, positively, in the year 1860; and the other assures us that 'the greatest-happiness principle' is to make a heaven of earth, in a still shorter time. We know these symptoms too well, to think it necessary or safe to interfere with them. Time and the hours will bring relief to all parties. The grand encourager of Delphic or other noises is—the Echo. Left to themselves, they will the sooner dissipate, and die away in space.

Meanwhile, we too admit that the present is an important time; as all present time necessarily is. The poorest Day that passes over us is the conflux of two Eternities; it is made up of currents that issue from the remotest Past, and flow onwards into the remotest Future. We were wise indeed, could we discern truly the signs of our own time; and by knowledge of its wants and advantages, wisely adjust our own position in it. Let us, instead of gazing idly into the obscure distance, look calmly around us, for a little, on the perplexed scene where we stand. Perhaps, on a more serious inspection, something of its perplexity will disappear, some of its distinctive characters and deeper tendencies more clearly reveal themselves; whereby our

own relations to it, our own true aims and endeavours in it, may also become clearer.

Were we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word; the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches and practises the great art of adapting means to ends. Nothing is now done directly, or by hand; all is by rule and calculated contrivance. For the simplest operation, some helps and accompaniments, some cunning abbreviating process is in readiness. Our old modes of exertion are all discredited, and thrown aside. On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one. The shuttle drops from the fingers of the weaver, and falls into iron fingers that ply it faster. The sailor furls his sail, and lays down his oar; and bids a strong, unwearied servant, on vaporous wings, bear him through the waters. Men have crossed oceans by steam; the Birmingham Fire-king has visited the fabulous East; and the genius of the Cape, were there any Camoens now to sing it, has again been alarmed, and with far stranger thunders than Gamas. There is no end to machinery. Even the horse is stripped of his harness, and finds a fleet fire-horse yoked in his stead. Nay, we have an artist that hatches chickens by steam; the very brood-hen is to be superseded! For all earthly, and for some unearthly purposes, we have machines and mechanic furtherances; for mincing our cabbages; for casting us into magnetic sleep. We remove mountains, and make seas our smooth highway; nothing can resist us. We war with rude Nature; and, by our resistless engines, come off always victorious, and loaded with spoils.

What wonderful accessions have thus been made, and are still making, to the physical power of mankind; how much better fed, clothed, lodged and, in all outward respects, accommodated men now are, or might be, by a given quantity of labour, is a grateful reflection which forces itself on every one. What changes, too, this addition of power is introducing into the Social System; how wealth has more and more increased, and at the same time gathered itself more and more into masses,

strangely altering the old relations, and increasing the distance between the rich and the poor, will be a question for Political Economists, and a much more complex and important one than any they have yet engaged with.

But leaving these matters for the present, let us observe how the mechanical genius of our time has diffused itself into quite other provinces. Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also. Here too nothing follows its spontaneous course, nothing is left to be accomplished by old natural methods. Everything has its cunningly devised implements, its preëstablished apparatus; it is not done by hand, but by machinery. Thus we have machines for Education: Lancastrian machines; Hamiltonian machines; monitors, maps and emblems. Instruction, that mysterious communing of Wisdom with Ignorance, is no longer an indefinable tentative process, requiring a study of individual aptitudes, and a perpetual variation of means and methods, to attain the same end; but a secure, universal, straightforward business, to be conducted in the gross, by proper mechanism, with such intellect as comes to hand. Then, we have Religious machines, of all imaginable varieties; the Bible-Society, professing a far higher and heavenly structure, is found, on inquiry, to be altogether an earthly contrivance: supported by collection of moneys, by fomenting of vanities, by puffing, intrigue and chicane; a machine for converting the Heathen. It is the same in all other departments. Has any man or any society of men, a truth to speak, a piece of spiritual work to do; they can nowise proceed at once and with the mere natural organs, but must first call a public meeting, appoint committees, issue prospectuses, eat a public dinner; in a word, construct or borrow machinery, wherewith to speak it and do it. Without machinery they were hopeless, helpless; a colony of Hindoo weavers squatting in the heart of Lancashire. Mark, too, how every machine must have its moving power, in some of the great currents of society; every little sect among us, Unitarians, Utilitarians, Anabaptists, Phrenologists, must have its Periodical, its monthly or quarterly Magazine;—hanging out, like its windmill, into the *popularis aura*, to grind meal for the society.

With individuals, in like manner, natural strength avails little. No individual now hopes to accomplish the poorest enterprise single-handed and without mechanical aids; he must

make interest with some existing corporation, and till his field with their oxen. In these days, more emphatically than ever, 'to live, signifies to unite with a party, or to make one.' Philosophy, Science, Art, Literature, all depend on machinery. No Newton, by silent meditation, now discovers the system of the world from the falling of an apple; but some quite other than Newton stands in his Museum, his Scientific Institution, and behind whole batteries of retorts, digesters and galvanic piles imperatively 'interrogates Nature,'—who, however, shows no haste to answer. In defect of Raphaels, and Angelos, and Mozarts, we have Royal Academies of Painting, Sculpture, Music; whereby the languishing spirit of Art may be strengthened, as by the more generous diet of a Public Kitchen. Literature, too, has its Paternoster-row mechanism, its Trade-dinners, its Editorial conclaves, and huge subterranean, puffing bellows; so that books are not only printed, but, in a great measure, written and sold, by machinery.

National culture, spiritual benefit of all sorts, is under the same management. No Queen Christina, in these times, needs to send for her Descartes; no King Frederick for his Voltaire, and painfully nourish him with pensions and flattery: any sovereign of taste, who wishes to enlighten his people, has only to impose a new tax, and with the proceeds establish Philosophic Institutes. Hence the Royal and Imperial Societies, the Bibliothèques, Glyptothèques, Technothèques, which front us in all capital cities; like so many well-finished hives, to which it is expected the stray agencies of Wisdom will swarm of their own accord, and hive and make honey. In like manner, among ourselves, when it is thought that religion is declining, we have only to vote half-a-million's worth of bricks and mortar, and build new churches. In Ireland it seems they have gone still farther, having actually established a 'Penny-a-week Purgatory-Society'! Thus does the Genius of Mechanism stand by to help us in all difficulties and emergencies, and with his iron back bears all our burdens.

These things, which we state lightly enough here, are yet of deep import, and indicate a mighty change in our whole manner of existence. For the same habit regulates not our modes of action alone, but our modes of thought and feeling. Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand. They have lost faith in individual endeavour, and in

natural force, of any kind. Not for internal perfection, but for external combinations and arrangements, for institutions, constitutions,—for Mechanism of one sort or other, do they hope and struggle. Their whole efforts, attachments, opinions, turn on mechanism, and are of a mechanical character.

We may trace this tendency in all the great manifestations of our time; in its intellectual aspect, the studies it most favours and its manner of conducting them; in its practical aspects, its politics, arts, religion, morals; in the whole sources, and throughout the whole currents, of its spiritual, no less than its material activity.

Consider, for example, the state of Science generally, in Europe, at this period. It is admitted, on all sides, that the Metaphysical and Moral Sciences are falling into decay, while the Physical are engrossing, every day, more respect and attention. In most of the European nations there is now no such thing as a Science of Mind; only more or less advancement in the general science, or the special sciences, of matter. The French were the first to desert Metaphysics; and though they have lately affected to revive their school, it has yet no signs of vitality. The land of Malebranche, Pascal, Descartes and Fénelon, has now only its Cousins and Villemains; while, in the department of Physics, it reckons far other names. Among ourselves, the Philosophy of Mind, after a rickety infancy, which never reached the vigour of manhood, fell suddenly into decay, languished and finally died out, with its last amiable cultivator, Professor Stewart. In no nation but Germany has any decisive effort been made in psychological science; not to speak of any decisive result. The science of the age, in short, is physical, chemical, physiological; in all shapes mechanical. Our favourite Mathematics, the highly prized exponent of all these other sciences, has also become more and more mechanical. Excellence in what is called its higher departments depends less on natural genius than on acquired expertness in wielding its machinery. Without undervaluing the wonderful results which a Lagrange or Laplace educes by means of it, we may remark, that their calculus, differential and integral, is little else than a more cunningly-constructed arithmetical mill; where the factors being put in, are, as it were, ground into the true product, under cover, and without other effort on our part than steady turning of the handle. We have more Mathematics than ever;

but less Mathesis. Archimedes and Plato could not have read the *Mécanique Céleste;* but neither would the whole French Institute see aught in that saying, 'God geometrises!' but a sentimental rodomontade.

Nay, our whole Metaphysics itself, from Locke's time downwards, has been physical; not a spiritual philosophy, but a material one. The singular estimation in which his Essay was so long held as a scientific work (an estimation grounded, indeed, on the estimable character of the man) will one day be thought a curious indication of the spirit of these times. His whole doctrine is mechanical, in its aim and origin, in its method and its results. It is not a philosophy of the mind: it is a mere discussion concerning the origin of our consciousness, or ideas, or whatever else they are called; a genetic history of what we see *in* the mind. The grand secrets of Necessity and Freewill, of the Mind's vital or non-vital dependence on Matter, of our mysterious relations to Time and Space, to God, to the Universe, are not, in the faintest degree, touched on in these inquiries; and seem not to have the smallest connexion with them.

The last class of our Scotch Metaphysicians had a dim notion that much of this was wrong; but they knew not how to right it. The school of Reid had also from the first taken a mechanical course, not seeing any other. The singular conclusions at which Hume, setting out from their admitted premises, was arriving, brought this school into being; they let loose Instinct, as an undiscriminating ban-dog, to guard them against these conclusions;—they tugged lustily at the logical chain by which Hume was so coldly towing them and the world into bottomless abysses of Atheism and Fatalism. But the chain somehow snapped between them; and the issue has been that nobody now cares about either,—any more than about Hartley's, Darwin's, or Priestley's contemporaneous doings in England. Hartley's vibrations and vibratiuncles, one would think, were material and mechanical enough; but our Continental neighbours have gone still farther. One of their philosophers has lately discovered, that 'as the liver secretes bile, so does the brain secrete thought;' which astonishing discovery Dr. Cabanis, more lately still, in his *Rapports du Physique et du Morale de l'Homme*, has pushed into its minutest developments.

The metaphysical philosophy of this last inquirer is cer-

tainly no shadowy or unsubstantial one. He fairly lays open our moral structure with his dissecting-knives and real metal probes; and exhibits it to the inspection of mankind, by Leuwenhoek microscopes, and inflation with the anatomical blowpipe. Thought, he is inclined to hold, is still secreted by the brain; but then Poetry and Religion (and it is really worth knowing) are 'a product of the smaller intestines'! We have the greatest admiration for this learned doctor: with what scientific stoicism he walks through the land of wonders, unwondering; like a wise man through some huge, gaudy, imposing Vauxhall, whose fire-works, cascades and symphonies, the vulgar may enjoy and believe in,—but where he finds nothing real but the saltpetre, pasteboard and catgut. His book may be regarded as the ultimatum of mechanical metaphysics in our time; a remarkable realisation of what in Martinus Scribblerus was still only an idea, that 'as the jack had a meat-roasting quality, so had the body a thinking quality,'—upon the strength of which the Nurembergers were to build a wood-and-leather man, 'who should reason as well as most country parsons.' Vaucanson did indeed make a wooden duck, that seemed to eat and digest; but that bold scheme of the Nurembergers remained for a more modern virtuoso.

This condition of the two great departments of knowledge,—the outward, cultivated exclusively on mechanical principles; the inward, finally abandoned, because, cultivated on such principles, it is found to yield no result,—sufficiently indicates the intellectual bias of our time, its all-pervading disposition towards that line of inquiry. In fact, an inward persuasion has long been diffusing itself, and now and then even comes to utterance, That, except the external, there are no true sciences; that to the inward world (if there be any) our only conceivable road is through the outward; that, in short, what cannot be investigated and understood mechanically, cannot be investigated and understood at all. We advert the more particularly to these intellectual propensities, as to prominent symptoms of our age, because Opinion is at all times doubly related to Action, first as cause, then as effect; and the speculative tendency of any age will therefore give us, on the whole, the best indications of its practical tendency.

Nowhere, for example, is the deep, almost exclusive faith we have in Mechanism more visible than in the Politics of this

time. Civil government does by its nature include much that is mechanical, and must be treated accordingly. We term it indeed, in ordinary language, the Machine of Society, and talk of it as the grand working wheel from which all private machines must derive, or to which they must adapt, their movements. Considered merely as a metaphor, all this is well enough; but here, as in so many other cases, the 'foam hardens itself into a shell,' and the shadow we have wantonly evoked stands terrible before us and will not depart at our bidding. Government includes much also that is not mechanical, and cannot be treated mechanically; of which latter truth, as appears to us, the political speculations and exertions of our time are taking less and less cognisance.

Nay, in the very outset, we might note the mighty interest taken in *mere political arrangements*, as itself the sign of a mechanical age. The whole discontent of Europe takes this direction. The deep, strong cry of all civilised nations,—a cry which, every one now sees, must and will be answered, is: Give us a reform of Government! A good structure of legislation, a proper check upon the executive, a wise arrangement of the judiciary, is *all* that is wanting for human happiness. The Philosopher of this age is not a Socrates, a Plato, a Hooker, or Taylor, who inculcates on men the necessity and infinite worth of moral goodness, the great truth that our happiness depends on the mind which is within us, and not on the circumstances which are without us; but a Smith, a De Lolme, a Bentham, who chiefly inculcates the reverse of this,—that our happiness depends entirely on external circumstances; nay, that the strength and dignity of the mind within us is itself the creature and consequence of these. Were the laws, the government, in good order, all were well with us; the rest would care for itself! Dissentients from this opinion, expressed or implied, are now rarely to be met with; widely and angrily as men differ in its application, the principle is admitted by all.

Equally mechanical, and of equal simplicity, are the methods proposed by both parties for completing or securing this all-sufficient perfection of arrangement. It is no longer the moral, religious, spiritual condition of the people that is our concern, but their physical, practical, economical condition, as regulated by public laws. Thus is the Body-politic more than ever worshipped and tendered; but the Soul-politic less than

ever. Love of country, in any high or generous sense, in any other than an almost animal sense, or mere habit, has little importance attached to it in such reforms, or in the opposition shown them. Men are to be guided only by their self-interests. Good government is a good balancing of these; and, except a keen eye and appetite for self-interest, requires no virtue in any quarter. To both parties it is emphatically a machine: to the discontented, a 'taxing-machine;' to the contented, a 'machine for securing property.' Its duties and its faults are not those of a father, but of an active parish-constable.

Thus it is by the mere condition of the machine, by preserving it untouched, or else by reconstructing it, and oiling it anew, that man's salvation as a social being is to be insured and indefinitely promoted. Contrive the fabric of law aright, and without farther effort on your part, that divine spirit of Freedom, which all hearts venerate and long for, will of herself come to inhabit it; and under her healing wings every noxious influence will wither, every good and salutary one more and more expand. Nay, so devoted are we to this principle, and at the same time so curiously mechanical, that a new trade, specially grounded on it, has arisen among us, under the name of 'Codification,' or codemaking in the abstract; whereby any people, for a reasonable consideration, may be accommodated with a patent code;—more easily than curious individuals with patent breeches, for the people does *not* need to be measured first.

To us who live in the midst of all this, and see continually the faith, hope and practice of every one founded on Mechanism of one kind or other, it is apt to seem quite natural, and as if it could never have been otherwise. Nevertheless, if we recollect or reflect a little, we shall find both that it has been, and might again be otherwise. The domain of Mechanism,—meaning thereby political, ecclesiastical or other outward establishments,—was once considered as embracing, and we are persuaded can at any time embrace, but a limited portion of man's interests, and by no means the highest portion.

To speak a little pedantically, there is a science of *Dynamics* in man's fortunes and nature, as well as of *Mechanics*. There is a science which treats of, and practically addresses, the primary, unmodified forces and energies of man, the mys-

terious springs of Love, and Fear, and Wonder, of Enthusiasm, Poetry, Religion, all which have a truly vital and *infinite* character; as well as a science which practically addresses the finite, modified developments of these, when they take the shape of immediate 'motives,' as hope of reward, or as fear of punishment.

Now it is certain, that in former times the wise men, the enlightened lovers of their kind, who appeared generally as Moralists, Poets or Priests, did, without neglecting the Mechanical province, deal chiefly with the Dynamical; applying themselves chiefly to regulate, increase and purify the inward primary powers of man; and fancying that herein lay the main difficulty, and the best service they could undertake. But a wide difference is manifest in our age. For the wise men, who now appear as Political Philosophers, deal exclusively with the Mechanical province; and occupying themselves in counting-up and estimating men's motives, strive by curious checking and balancing, and other adjustments of Profit and Loss, to guide them to their true advantage: while, unfortunately, those same 'motives' are so innumerable, and so variable in every individual, that no really useful conclusion can ever be drawn from their enumeration. But though Mechanism, wisely contrived, has done much for man in a social and moral point of view, we cannot be persuaded that it has ever been the chief source of his worth or happiness. Consider the great elements of human enjoyment, the attainments and possessions that exalt man's life to its present height, and see what part of these he owes to institutions, to Mechanism of any kind; and what to the instinctive, unbounded force, which Nature herself lent him, and still continues to him. Shall we say, for example, that Science and Art are indebted principally to the founders of Schools and Universities? Did not Science originate rather, and gain advancement, in the obscure closets of the Roger Bacons, Keplers, Newtons; in the workshops of the Fausts and the Watts; wherever, and in what guise soever Nature, from the first times downwards, had sent a gifted spirit upon the earth? Again, were Homer and Shakspeare members of any beneficed guild, or made Poets by means of it? Were Painting and Sculpture created by forethought, brought into the world by institutions for that end? No; Science and Art have, from first to last, been the free gift of Nature; an unsolicited, unexpected gift;

often even a fatal one. These things rose up, as it were, by spontaneous growth, in the free soil and sunshine of Nature. They were not planted or grafted, nor even greatly multiplied or improved by the culture or manuring of institutions. Generally speaking, they have derived only partial help from these; often enough have suffered damage. They made constitutions for themselves. They originated in the Dynamical nature of man, not in his Mechanical nature.

Or, to take an infinitely higher instance, that of the Christian Religion, which, under every theory of it, in the believing or unbelieving mind, must ever be regarded as the crowning glory, or rather the life and soul, of our whole modern culture: How did Christianity arise and spread abroad among men? Was it by institutions, and establishments and well-arranged systems of mechanism? Not so; on the contrary, in all past and existing institutions for those ends, its divine spirit has invariably been found to languish and decay. It arose in the mystic deeps of man's soul; and was spread abroad by the 'preaching of the word,' by simple, altogether natural and individual efforts; and flew, like hallowed fire, from heart to heart, till all were purified and illuminated by it; and its heavenly light shone, as it still shines, and (as sun or star) will ever shine, through the whole dark destinies of man. Here again was no Mechanism; man's highest attainment was accomplished Dynamically, not Mechanically.

Nay, we will venture to say, that no high attainment, not even any far-extending movement among men, was ever accomplished otherwise. Strange as it may seem, if we read History with any degree of thoughtfulness, we shall find that the checks and balances of Profit and Loss have never been the grand agents with men; that they have never been roused into deep, thorough, all-pervading efforts by any computable prospect of Profit and Loss, for any visible, finite object; but always for some invisible and infinite one. The Crusades took their rise in Religion; their visible object was, commercially speaking, worth nothing. It was the boundless Invisible world that was laid bare in the imaginations of those men; and in its burning light, the visible shrunk as a scroll. Not mechanical, nor produced by mechanical means, was this vast movement. No dining at Freemasons' Tavern, with the other long train of modern machinery; no cunning reconciliation of 'vested interests,' was

required here: only the passionate voice of one man, the rapt soul looking through the eyes of one man; and rugged, steel-clad Europe trembled beneath his words, and followed him whither he listed. In later ages it was still the same. The Reformation had an invisible, mystic and ideal aim; the result was indeed to be embodied in external things; but its spirit, its worth, was internal, invisible, infinite. Our English Revolution too originated in Religion. Men did battle, in those old days, not for Purse-sake, but for Conscience-sake. Nay, in our own days it is no way different. The French Revolution itself had something higher in it than cheap bread and a Habeas-corpus act. Here too was an Idea; a Dynamic, not a Mechanic force. It was a struggle, though a blind and at last an insane one, for the infinite, divine nature of Right, of Freedom, of Country.

Thus does man, in every age, vindicate, consciously or unconsciously, his celestial birthright. Thus does Nature hold on her wondrous, unquestionable course; and all our systems and theories are but so many froth-eddies or sandbanks, which from time to time she casts up, and washes away. When we can drain the Ocean into mill-ponds, and bottle-up the Force of Gravity, to be sold by retail, in gas jars; then may we hope to comprehend the infinitudes of man's soul under formulas of Profit and Loss; and rule over this too, as over a patent engine, by checks, and valves, and balances.

Nay, even with regard to Government itself, can it be necessary to remind any one that Freedom, without which indeed all spiritual life is impossible, depends on infinitely more complex influences than either the extension or the curtailment of the 'democratic interest'? Who is there that, 'taking the high *priori* road,' shall point out what these influences are; what deep, subtle, inextricably entangled influences they have been and may be? For man is not the creature and product of Mechanism; but, in a far truer sense, its creator and producer: it is the noble People that makes the noble Government; rather than conversely. On the whole, Institutions are much; but they are not all. The freest and highest spirits of the world have often been found under strange outward circumstances: Saint Paul and his brother Apostles were politically slaves; Epictetus was personally one. Again, forget the influences of Chivalry and Religion, and ask: What countries produced Columbus and Las Casas? Or, descending from virtue and hero-

ism to mere energy and spiritual talent: Cortes, Pizarro, Alba, Ximenes? The Spaniards of the sixteenth century were indisputably the noblest nation of Europe: yet they had the Inquisition and Philip II. They have the same government at this day; and are the lowest nation. The Dutch too have retained their old constitution; but no Siege of Leyden, no William the Silent, not even an Egmont or De Witt any longer appears among them. With ourselves also, where much has changed, effect has nowise followed cause as it should have done: two centuries ago, the Commons Speaker addressed Queen Elizabeth on bended knees, happy that the virago's foot did not even smite him; yet the people were then governed, not by a Castlereagh, but by a Burghley; they had their Shakspeare and Philip Sidney, where we have our Sheridan Knowles and Beau Brummel.

These and the like facts are so familiar, the truths which they preach so obvious, and have in all past times been so universally believed and acted on, that we should almost feel ashamed for repeating them; were it not that, on every hand, the memory of them seems to have passed away, or at best died into a faint tradition, of no value as a practical principle. To judge by the loud clamour of our Constitution-builders, Statists, Economists, directors, creators, reformers of Public Societies; in a word, all manner of Mechanists, from the Cartwright up to the Code-maker; and by the nearly total silence of all Preachers and Teachers who should give a voice to Poetry, Religion and Morality, we might fancy either that man's Dynamical nature was, to all spiritual intents, extinct, or else so perfected that nothing more was to be made of it by the old means; and henceforth only in his Mechanical contrivances did any hope exist for him.

To define the limits of these two departments of man's activity, which work into one another, and by means of one another, so intricately and inseparably, were by its nature an impossible attempt. Their relative importance, even to the wisest mind, will vary in different times, according to the special wants and dispositions of those times. Meanwhile, it seems clear enough that only in the right coördination of the two, and the vigorous forwarding of *both*, does our true line of action lie. Undue cultivation of the inward or Dynamical province leads to idle, visionary, impracticable courses, and, especially in rude

eras, to Superstition and Fanaticism, with their long train of baleful and well-known evils. Undue cultivation of the outward, again, though less immediately prejudicial, and even for the time productive of many palpable benefits, must, in the long-run, by destroying Moral Force, which is the parent of all other Force, prove not less certainly, and perhaps still more hopelessly, pernicious. This, we take it, is the grand characteristic of our age. By our skill in Mechanism, it has come to pass, that in the management of external things we excel all other ages; while in whatever respects the pure moral nature, in true dignity of soul and character, we are perhaps inferior to most civilised ages.

In fact, if we look deeper, we shall find that this faith in Mechanism has now struck its roots down into man's most intimate, primary sources of conviction; and is thence sending up, over his whole life and activity, innumerable stems,—fruit-bearing and poison-bearing. The truth is, men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe, and hope, and work only in the Visible; or, to speak it in other words: This is not a Religious age. Only the material, the immediately practical, not the divine and spiritual, is important to us. The infinite, absolute character of Virtue has passed into a finite, conditional one; it is no longer a worship of the Beautiful and Good; but a calculation of the Profitable. Worship, indeed, in any sense, is not recognised among us, or is mechanically explained into Fear of pain, or Hope of pleasure. Our true Deity is Mechanism. It has subdued external Nature for us, and we think it will do all other things. We are Giants in physical power: in a deeper than metaphorical sense, we are Titans, that strive, by heaping mountain on mountain, to conquer Heaven also.

The strong Mechanical character, so visible in the spiritual pursuits and methods of this age, may be traced much farther into the condition and prevailing disposition of our spiritual nature itself. Consider, for example, the general fashion of Intellect in this era. Intellect, the power man has of knowing and believing, is now nearly synonymous with Logic, or the mere power of arranging and communicating. Its implement is not Meditation, but Argument. 'Cause and effect' is almost the only category under which we look at, and work with, all Nature. Our first question with regard to any object is not, What is it?

but, How is it? We are no longer instinctively driven to apprehend, and lay to heart, what is Good and Lovely, but rather to inquire, as onlookers, how it is produced, whence it comes, whither it goes. Our favourite Philosophers have no love and no hatred; they stand among us not to do, nor to create anything, but as a sort of Logic-mills to grind out the true causes and effects of all that is done and created. To the eye of a Smith, a Hume or a Constant, all is well that works quietly. An Order of Ignatius Loyola, a Presbyterianism of John Knox, a Wickliffe or a Henry the Eighth, are simply so many mechanical phenomena, caused or causing.

The *Euphuist* of our day differs much from his pleasant predecessors. An intellectual dapperling of these times boasts chiefly of his irresistible perspicacity, his 'dwelling in the daylight of truth,' and so forth; which, on examination, turns out to be a dwelling in the *rush*-light of 'closet-logic,' and a deep unconsciousness that there is any other light to dwell in or any other objects to survey with it. Wonder, indeed, is, on all hands, dying out: it is the sign of uncultivation to wonder. Speak to any small man of a high, majestic Reformation, of a high majestic Luther; and forthwith he sets about 'accounting' for it; how the 'circumstances of the time' called for such a character, and found him, we suppose, standing girt and road-ready, to do its errand; how the 'circumstances of the time' created, fashioned, floated him quietly along into the result; how, in short, this small man, had he been there, could have performed the like himself! For it is the 'force of circumstances' that does everything; the force of one man can do nothing. Now all this is grounded on little more than a metaphor. We figure Society as a 'Machine,' and that mind is opposed to mind, as body is to body; whereby two, or at most ten, little minds must be stronger than one great mind. Notable absurdity! For the plain truth, very plain, we think is, that minds are opposed to minds in quite a different way; and *one* man that has a higher Wisdom, a hitherto unknown spiritual Truth in him, is stronger, not than ten men that have it not, or than ten thousand, but than *all* men that have it not; and stands among them with a quite ethereal, angelic power, as with a sword out of Heaven's own armory, sky-tempered, which no buckler, and no tower of brass, will finally withstand.

But to us, in these times, such considerations rarely occur.

We enjoy, we see nothing by direct vision; but only by reflection, and in anatomical dismemberment. Like Sir Hudibras, for every Why we must have a Wherefore. We have our little *theory* on all human and divine things. Poetry, the workings of genius itself, which in all times, with one or another meaning, has been called Inspiration, and held to be mysterious and inscrutable, is no longer without its scientific exposition. The building of the lofty rhyme is like any other masonry or bricklaying: we have theories of its rise, height, decline and fall,—which latter, it would seem, is now near, among all people. Of our 'Theories of Taste,' as they are called, wherein the deep, infinite, unspeakable Love of Wisdom and Beauty, which dwells in all men, is 'explained,' made mechanically visible, from 'Association' and the like, why should we say anything? Hume has written us a 'Natural History of Religion;' in which one Natural History all the rest are included. Strangely too does the general feeling coincide with Hume's in this wonderful problem; for whether his 'Natural History' be the right one or not, that Religion must have a Natural History, all of us, cleric and laic, seem to be agreed. He indeed regards it as a Disease, we again as Health; so far there is a difference; but in our first principle we are at one.

To what extent theological Unbelief, we mean intellectual dissent from the Church, in its view of Holy Writ, prevails at this day, would be a highly important, were it not, under any circumstances, an almost impossible inquiry. But the Unbelief, which is of a still more fundamental character, every man may see prevailing, with scarcely any but the faintest contradiction, all around him; even in the Pulpit itself. Religion in most countries, more or less in every country, is no longer what it was, and should be,—a thousand-voiced psalm from the heart of Man to his invisible Father, the fountain of all Goodness, Beauty, Truth, and revealed in every revelation of these; but for the most part, a wise prudential feeling grounded on mere calculation; a matter, as all others now are, of Expediency and Utility; whereby some smaller quantum of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a far larger quantum of celestial enjoyment. Thus Religion too is Profit, a working for wages; not Reverence, but vulgar Hope or Fear. Many, we know, very many we hope, are still religious in a far different sense; were it not so, our case were too desperate: but to witness that such is the

temper of the times, we take any calm observant man, who agrees or disagrees in our feeling on the matter, and ask him whether our *view* of it is not in general well-founded.

Literature too, if we consider it, gives similar testimony. At no former era has Literature, the printed communication of Thought, been of such importance as it is now. We often hear that the Church is in danger; and truly so it is,—in a danger it seems not to know of: for, with its tithes in the most perfect safety, its functions are becoming more and more superseded. The true Church of England, at this moment, lies in the Editors of its Newspapers. These preach to the people daily, weekly; admonishing kings themselves; advising peace or war, with an authority which only the first Reformers, and a long-past class of Popes, were possessed of; inflicting moral censure; imparting moral encouragement, consolation, edification; in all ways diligently 'administering the Discipline of the Church.' It may be said too, that in private disposition the new Preachers somewhat resemble the Mendicant Friars of old times: outwardly full of holy zeal; inwardly not without stratagem, and hunger for terrestrial things. But omitting this class, and the boundless host of watery personages who pipe, as they are able, on so many scrannel straws, let us look at the higher regions of Literature, where, if anywhere, the pure melodies of Poesy and Wisdom should be heard. Of natural talent there is no deficiency: one or two richly-endowed individuals even give us a superiority in this respect. But what is the song they sing? Is it a tone of the Memnon Statue, breathing music as the *light* first touches it? A 'liquid wisdom,' disclosing to our sense the deep, infinite harmonies of Nature and man's soul? Alas, no! It is not a matin or vesper hymn to the Spirit of Beauty, but a fierce clashing of cymbals, and shouting of multitudes, as children pass through the fire to Moloch! Poetry itself has no eye for the Invisible. Beauty is no longer the god it worships, but some brute image of Strength; which we may call an idol, for true Strength is one and the same with Beauty, and its worship also is a hymn. The meek, silent Light can mould, create and purify all Nature; but the loud Whirlwind, the sign and product of Disunion, of Weakness, passes on, and is forgotten. How widely this veneration for the physically Strongest has spread itself through Literature, any one may judge who reads either criti-

cism or poem. We praise a work, not as 'true,' but as 'strong;' our highest praise is that it has 'affected' us, has 'terrified' us. All this, it has been well observed, is the 'maximum of the Barbarous,' the symptom, not of vigorous refinement, but of luxurious corruption. It speaks much, too, for men's indestructible love of truth, that nothing of this kind will abide with them; that even the talent of a Byron cannot permanently seduce us into idol-worship; that he too, with all his wild siren charming, already begins to be disregarded and forgotten.

Again, with respect to our Moral condition: here also he who runs may read that the same physical, mechanical influences are everywhere busy. For the 'superior morality,' of which we hear so much, we too would desire to be thankful: at the same time, it were but blindness to deny that this 'superior morality' is properly rather an 'inferior criminality,' produced not by greater love of Virtue, but by greater perfection of Police; and of that far subtler and stronger Police, called Public Opinion. This last watches over us with its Argus eyes more keenly than ever; but the 'inward eye' seems heavy with sleep. Of any belief in invisible, divine things, we find as few traces in our Morality as elsewhere. It is by tangible, material considerations that we are guided, not by inward and spiritual. Self-denial, the parent of all virtue, in any true sense of that word, has perhaps seldom been rarer: so rare is it, that the most, even in their abstract speculations, regard its existence as a chimera. Virtue is Pleasure, is Profit; no celestial, but an earthly thing. Virtuous men, Philanthropists, Martyrs are happy accidents; their 'taste' lies the right way! In all senses, we worship and follow after Power; which may be called a physical pursuit. No man now loves Truth, as Truth must be loved, with an infinite love; but only with a finite love, and as it were *par amours*. Nay, properly speaking, he does not *believe* and know it, but only '*thinks*' it, and that 'there is every probability'! He preaches it aloud, and rushes courageously forth with it,—if there is a multitude huzzaing at his back; yet ever keeps looking over his shoulder, and the instant the huzzaing languishes, he too stops short.

In fact, what morality we have takes the shape of Ambition, of 'Honour:' beyond money and money's worth, our only rational blessedness is Popularity. It were but a fool's trick to die for conscience. Only for 'character,' by duel, or in case of

extremity, by suicide, is the wise man bound to die. By arguing on the 'force of circumstances,' we have argued away all force from ourselves; and stand leashed together, uniform in dress and movement, like the rowers of some boundless galley. This and that may be right and true; *but* we must not do it. Wonderful 'Force of Public Opinion'! We must act and walk in all points as it prescribes; follow the traffic it bids us, realise the sum of money, the degree of 'influence' it expects of us, *or* we shall be lightly esteemed; certain mouthfuls of articulate wind will be blown at us, and this what mortal courage can front? Thus, while civil liberty is more and more secured to us, our moral liberty is all but lost. Practically considered, our creed is Fatalism; and, free in hand and foot, we are shackled in heart and soul with far straiter than feudal chains. Truly may we say, with the Philosopher, 'the deep meaning of the Laws of Mechanism lies heavy on us;' and in the closet, in the marketplace, in the temple, by the social hearth, encumbers the whole movements of our mind, and over our noblest faculties is spreading a nightmare sleep.

These dark features, we are aware, belong more or less to other ages, as well as to ours. This faith in Mechanism, in the all-importance of physical things, is in every age the common refuge of Weakness and blind Discontent; of all who believe, as many will ever do, that man's true good lies without him, not within. We are aware also, that, as applied to ourselves in all their aggravation, they form but half a picture; that in the whole picture there are bright lights as well as gloomy shadows. If we here dwell chiefly on the latter, let us not be blamed: it is in general more profitable to reckon up our defects than to boast of our attainments.

Neither, with all these evils more or less clearly before us, have we at any time despaired of the fortunes of society. Despair, or even despondency, in that respect, appears to us, in all cases, a groundless feeling. We have a faith in the imperishable dignity of man; in the high vocation to which, throughout this his earthly history, he has been appointed. However it may be with individual nations, whatever melancholic speculators may assert, it seems a well-ascertained fact, that in all times, reckoning even from those of the Heraclides and Pelasgi, the happiness and greatness of mankind at large have been

continually progressive. Doubtless this age also is advancing. Its very unrest, its ceaseless activity, its discontent contains matter of promise. Knowledge, education are opening the eyes of the humblest; are increasing the number of thinking minds without limit. This is as it should be; for not in turning back, not in resisting, but only in resolutely struggling forward, does our life consist.

Nay, after all, our spiritual maladies are but of Opinion; we are but fettered by chains of our own forging, and which ourselves also can rend asunder. This deep, paralysed subjection to physical objects comes not from Nature, but from our own unwise mode of *viewing* Nature. Neither can we understand that man wants, at this hour, any faculty of heart, soul or body, that ever belonged to him. 'He, who has been born, has been a First Man;' has had lying before his young eyes, and as yet unhardened into scientific shapes, a world as plastic, infinite, divine, as lay before the eyes of Adam himself. If Mechanism, like some glass bell, encircles and imprisons us; if the soul looks forth on a fair heavenly country which it cannot reach, and pines, and in its scanty atmosphere is ready to perish,—yet the bell is but of glass; 'one bold stroke to break 'the bell in pieces, and thou art delivered!' Not the invisible world is wanting, for it dwells in man's soul, and this last is still here. Are the solemn temples, in which the Divinity was once visibly revealed among us, crumbling away? We can repair them, we can rebuild them. The wisdom, the heroic worth of our forefathers, which we have lost, we can recover. That admiration of old nobleness, which now so often shows itself as a faint *dilettantism*, will one day become a generous emulation, and man may again be all that he has been, and more than he has been. Nor are these the mere daydreams of fancy; they are clear possibilities; nay, in this time they are even assuming the character of hopes. Indications we do see in other countries and in our own, signs infinitely cheering to us, that Mechanism is not always to be our hard taskmaster, but one day to be our pliant, all-ministering servant; that a new and brighter spiritual era is slowly evolving itself for all men. But on these things our present course forbids us to enter.

Meanwhile, that great outward changes are in progress can be doubtful to no one. The time is sick and out of joint. Many things have reached their height; and it is a wise adage that

tells us, 'the darkest hour is nearest the dawn.' Wherever we can gather indication of the public thought, whether from printed books, as in France or Germany, or from Carbonari rebellions and other political tumults, as in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, the voice it utters is the same. The thinking minds of all nations call for change. There is a deep-lying struggle in the whole fabric of society; a boundless grinding collision of the New with the Old. The French Revolution, as is now visible enough, was not the parent of this mighty movement, but its offspring. Those two hostile influences, which always exist in human things, and on the constant intercommunion of which depends their health and safety, had lain in separate masses, accumulating through generations, and France was the scene of their fiercest explosion; but the final issue was not unfolded in that country: nay it is not yet anywhere unfolded. Political freedom is hitherto the object of these efforts; but they will not and cannot stop there. It is towards a higher freedom than mere freedom from oppression by his fellow-mortal, that man dimly aims. Of this higher, heavenly freedom, which is 'man's reasonable service,' all his noble institutions, his faithful endeavours and loftiest attainments, are but the body, and more and more approximated emblem.

On the whole, as this wondrous planet, Earth, is journeying with its fellows through infinite Space, so are the wondrous destinies embarked on it journeying through infinite Time, under a higher guidance than ours. For the present, as our astronomy informs us, its path lies towards *Hercules*, the constellation of *Physical Power:* but that is not our most pressing concern. Go where it will, the deep HEAVEN will be around it. Therein let us have hope and sure faith. To reform a world, to reform a nation, no wise man will undertake; and all but foolish men know, that the only solid, though a far slower reformation, is what each begins and perfects on *himself*.

ON HISTORY.[1]

[1830.]

CLIO was figured by the ancients as the eldest daughter of Memory, and chief of the Muses; which dignity, whether we regard the essential qualities of her art, or its practice and acceptance among men, we shall still find to have been fitly bestowed. History, as it lies at the root of all science, is also the first distinct product of man's spiritual nature; his earliest expression of what can be called Thought. It is a looking both before and after; as, indeed, the coming Time already waits, unseen, yet definitely shaped, predetermined and inevitable, in the Time come; and only by the combination of both is the meaning of either completed. The Sibylline Books, though old, are not the oldest. Some nations have prophecy, some have not: but of all mankind, there is no tribe so rude that it has not attempted History, though several have not arithmetic enough to count Five. History has been written with quipo-threads, with feather-pictures, with wampum-belts; still oftener with earth-mounds and monumental stone-heaps, whether as pyramid or cairn; for the Celt and the Copt, the Red man as well as the White, lives between two eternities, and warring against Oblivion, he would fain unite himself in clear conscious relation, as in dim unconscious relation he is already united, with the whole Future and the whole Past.

A talent for History may be said to be born with us, as our chief inheritance. In a certain sense all men are historians. Is not every memory written quite full with Annals, wherein joy and mourning, conquest and loss manifoldly alternate; and, with or without philosophy, the whole fortunes of one little inward Kingdom, and all its politics, foreign and domestic, stand ineffaceably recorded? Our very speech is curiously historical.

[1] FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 10.

Most men, you may observe, speak only to narrate; not in imparting what they have thought, which indeed were often a very small matter, but in exhibiting what they have undergone or seen, which is a quite unlimited one, do talkers dilate. Cut us off from Narrative, how would the stream of conversation, even among the wisest, languish into detached handfuls, and among the foolish utterly evaporate! Thus, as we do nothing but enact History, we say little but recite it: nay rather, in that widest sense, our whole spiritual life is built thereon. For, strictly considered, what is all Knowledge too but recorded Experience, and a product of History; of which, therefore, Reasoning and Belief, no less than Action and Passion, are essential materials?

Under a limited, and the only practicable shape, History proper, that part of History which treats of remarkable action, has, in all modern as well as ancient times, ranked among the highest arts, and perhaps never stood higher than in these times of ours. For whereas, of old, the charm of History lay chiefly in gratifying our common appetite for the wonderful, for the unknown; and her office was but as that of a Minstrel and Storyteller, she has now farther become a Schoolmistress, and professes to instruct in gratifying. Whether, with the stateliness of that venerable character, she may not have taken up something of its austerity and frigidity; whether in the logical terseness of a Hume or Robertson, the graceful ease and gay pictorial heartiness of a Herodotus or Froissart may not be wanting, is not the question for us here. Enough that all learners, all inquiring minds of every order, are gathered round her footstool, and reverently pondering her lessons, as the true basis of Wisdom. Poetry, Divinity, Politics, Physics, have each their adherents and adversaries; each little guild supporting a defensive and offensive war for its own special domain; while the domain of History is as a Free Emporium, where all these belligerents peaceably meet and furnish themselves; and Sentimentalist and Utilitarian, Sceptic and Theologian, with one voice advise us: Examine History, for it is 'Philosophy teaching by Experience.'

Far be it from us to disparage such teaching, the very attempt at which must be precious. Neither shall we too rigidly inquire: How much it has hitherto profited? Whether most of what little practical wisdom men have, has come from study of professed History, or from other less boasted sources, whereby,

as matters now stand, a Marlborough may become great in the world's business, with no History save what he derives from Shakspeare's Plays? Nay, whether in that same teaching by Experience, historical Philosophy has yet properly deciphered the first element of all science in this kind: What the aim and significance of that wondrous changeful Life it investigates and paints may be? Whence the course of man's destinies in this Earth originated, and whither they are tending? Or, indeed, if they have any course and tendency, are really guided forward by an unseen mysterious Wisdom, or only circle in blind mazes without recognisable guidance? Which questions, altogether fundamental, one might think, in any Philosophy of History, have, since the era when Monkish Annalists were wont to answer them by the long-ago extinguished light of their Missal and Breviary, been by most philosophical Historians only glanced at dubiously and from afar; by many, not so much as glanced at.

The truth is, two difficulties, never wholly surmountable, lie in the way. Before Philosophy can teach by Experience, the Philosophy has to be in readiness, the Experience must be gathered and intelligibly recorded. Now, overlooking the former consideration, and with regard only to the latter, let any one who has examined the current of human affairs, and how intricate, perplexed, unfathomable, even when seen into with our own eyes, are their thousandfold blending movements, say whether the true representing of it is easy or impossible. Social Life is the aggregate of all the individual men's Lives who constitute society; History is the essence of innumerable Biographies. But if one Biography, nay our own Biography, study and recapitulate it as we may, remains in so many points unintelligible to us; how much more must these million, the very facts of which, to say nothing of the purport of them, we know not, and cannot know!

Neither will it adequately avail us to assert that the general inward condition of Life is the same in all ages; and that only the remarkable deviations from the common endowment and common lot, and the more important variations which the outward figure of Life has from time to time undergone, deserve memory and record. The inward condition of Life, it may rather be affirmed, the conscious or half-conscious aim of mankind, so far as men are not mere digesting-machines, is the same in no two ages; neither are the more important outward

variations easy to fix on, or always well capable of representation. Which was the greatest innovator, which was the more important personage in man's history, he who first led armies over the Alps, and gained the victories of Cannæ and Thrasymene; or the nameless boor who first hammered out for himself an iron spade? When the oak-tree is felled, the whole forest echoes with it; but a hundred acorns are planted silently by some unnoticed breeze. Battles and war-tumults, which for the time din every ear, and with joy or terror intoxicate every heart, pass away like tavern-brawls; and, except some few Marathons and Morgartens, are remembered by accident, not by desert. Laws themselves, political Constitutions, are not our Life, but only the house wherein our Life is led: nay they are but the bare walls of the house; all whose essential furniture, the inventions and traditions, and daily habits that regulate and support our existence, are the work not of Dracos and Hampdens, but of Phœnician mariners, of Italian masons and Saxon metallurgists, of philosophers, alchymists, prophets, and all the long-forgotten train of artists and artisans; who from the first have been jointly teaching us how to think and how to act, how to rule over spiritual and over physical Nature. Well may we say that of our History the more important part is lost without recovery; and,—as thanksgivings were once wont to be offered 'for unrecognised mercies,'—look with reverence into the dark untenanted places of the Past, where, in formless oblivion, our chief benefactors, with all their sedulous endeavours, but not with the fruit of these, lie entombed.

So imperfect is that same Experience, by which Philosophy is to teach. Nay, even with regard to those occurrences which do stand recorded, which, at their origin have seemed worthy of record, and the summary of which constitutes what we now call History, is not our understanding of them altogether incomplete; is it even possible to represent them as they were? The old story of Sir Walter Raleigh's looking from his prison-window, on some street tumult, which afterwards three witnesses reported in three different ways, himself differing from them all, is still a true lesson for us. Consider how it is that historical documents and records originate; even honest records, where the reporters were unbiased by personal regard; a case which, were nothing more wanted, must ever be among the rarest. The real leading features of a historical Transaction,

those movements that essentially characterise it, and alone deserve to be recorded, are nowise the foremost to be noted. At first, among the various witnesses, who are also parties interested, there is only vague wonder, and fear or hope, and the noise of Rumour's thousand tongues; till, after a season, the conflict of testimonies has subsided into some general issue; and then it is settled, by majority of votes, that such and such a 'Crossing of the Rubicon,' an 'Impeachment of Strafford,' a 'Convocation of the Notables,' are epochs in the world's history, cardinal points on which grand world-revolutions have hinged. Suppose, however, that the majority of votes was all wrong; that the real cardinal points lay far deeper; and had been passed over unnoticed, because no Seer, but only mere Onlookers, chanced to be there! Our clock strikes when there is a change from hour to hour; but no hammer in the Horologe of Time peals through the universe when there is a change from Era to Era. Men understand not what is among their hands: as calmness is the characteristic of strength, so the weightiest causes may be most silent. It is, in no case, the real historical Transaction, but only some more or less plausible scheme and theory of the Transaction, or the harmonised result of many such schemes, each varying from the other and all varying from truth, that we can ever hope to behold.

Nay, were our faculty of insight into passing things never so complete, there is still a fatal discrepancy between our manner of observing these, and their manner of occurring. The most gifted man can observe, still more can record, only the *series* of his own impressions: his observation, therefore, to say nothing of its other imperfections, must be *successive*, while the things done were often *simultaneous;* the things done were not a series, but a group. It is not in acted, as it is in written History: actual events are nowise so simply related to each other as parent and offspring are; every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous, and will in its turn combine with all others to give birth to new: it is an ever-living, ever-working Chaos of Being, wherein shape after shape bodies itself forth from innumerable elements. And this Chaos, boundless as the habitation and duration of man, unfathomable as the soul and destiny of man, is what the historian will depict, and scientifically gauge, we may say, by threading it with single lines of a few ells in length!

For as all Action is, by its nature, to be figured as extended in breadth and in depth, as well as in length; that is to say, is based on Passion and Mystery, if we investigate its origin; and spreads abroad on all hands, modifying and modified; as well as advances towards completion,—so all Narrative is, by its nature, of only one dimension; only travels forward towards one, or towards successive points: Narrative is *linear*, Action is *solid*. Alas for our 'chains,' or chainlets, of 'causes and effects,' which we so assiduously track through certain handbreadths of years and square miles, when the whole is a broad, deep Immensity, and each atom is 'chained' and complected with all! Truly, if History is Philosophy teaching by Experience, the writer fitted to compose History is hitherto an unknown man. The Experience itself would require All-knowledge to record it,—were the All-wisdom needful for such Philosophy as would interpret it, to be had for asking. Better were it that mere earthly Historians should lower such pretensions, more suitable for Omniscience than for human science; and aiming only at some picture of the things acted, which picture itself will at best be a poor approximation, leave the inscrutable purport of them an acknowledged secret; or at most, in reverent Faith, far different from that teaching of Philosophy, pause over the mysterious vestiges of Him, whose path is in the great deep of Time, whom History indeed reveals, but only all History, and in Eternity, will clearly reveal.

Such considerations truly were of small profit, did they, instead of teaching us vigilance and reverent humility in our inquiries into History, abate our esteem for them, or discourage us from unweariedly prosecuting them. Let us search more and more into the Past; let all men explore it, as the true fountain of knowledge; by whose light alone, consciously or unconsciously employed, can the Present and the Future be interpreted or guessed at. For though the whole meaning lies far beyond our ken; yet in that complex Manuscript, covered over with formless inextricably-entangled unknown characters,—nay which is a *Palimpsest*, and had once prophetic writing, still dimly legible there,—some letters, some words, may be deciphered; and if no complete Philosophy, here and there an intelligible precept, available in practice, be gathered: well understanding, in the mean while, that it is only a little portion we have deciphered; that much still remains to be interpreted;

that History is a real Prophetic Manuscript, and can be fully interpreted by no man.

But the Artist in History may be distinguished from the Artisan in History; for here, as in all other provinces, there are Artists and Artisans; men who labour mechanically in a department, without eye for the Whole, not feeling that there is a Whole; and men who inform and ennoble the humblest department with an Idea of the Whole, and habitually know that only in the Whole is the Partial to be truly discerned. The proceedings and the duties of these two, in regard to History, must be altogether different. Not, indeed, that each has not a real worth, in his several degree. The simple husbandman can till his field, and by knowledge he has gained of its soil, sow it with the fit grain, though the deep rocks and central fires are unknown to him: his little crop hangs under and over the firmament of stars, and sails through whole untracked celestial spaces, between Aries and Libra; nevertheless it ripens for him in due season, and he gathers it safe into his barn. As a husbandman he is blameless in disregarding those higher wonders; but as a thinker, and faithful inquirer into Nature, he were wrong. So likewise is it with the Historian, who examines some special aspect of History; and from this or that combination of circumstances, political, moral, economical, and the issues it has led to, infers that such and such properties belong to human society, and that the like circumstances will produce the like issue; which inference, if other trials confirm it, must be held true and practically valuable. He is wrong only, and an artisan, when he fancies that these properties, discovered or discoverable, exhaust the matter; and sees not, at every step, that it is inexhaustible.

However, that class of cause-and-effect speculators, with whom no wonder would remain wonderful, but all things in Heaven and Earth must be computed and 'accounted for;' and even the Unknown, the Infinite in man's Life, had under the words *enthusiasm*, *superstition*, *spirit of the age* and so forth, obtained, as it were, an algebraical symbol and given value,—have now wellnigh played their part in European culture; and may be considered, as in most countries, even in England itself where they linger the latest, verging towards extinction. He who reads the inscrutable Book of Nature as if it were a Merchant's Ledger, is justly suspected of having never seen that

Book, but only some school Synopsis thereof; from which, if taken for the real Book, more error than insight is to be derived.

Doubtless also, it is with a growing feeling of the infinite nature of History, that in these times, the old principle, division of labour, has been so widely applied to it. The Political Historian, once almost the sole cultivator of History, has now found various associates, who strive to elucidate other phases of human Life; of which, as hinted above, the political conditions it is passed under are but one, and though the primary, perhaps not the most important, of the many outward arrangements. Of this Historian himself, moreover, in his own special department, new and higher things are beginning to be expected. From of old, it was too often to be reproachfully observed of him, that he dwelt with disproportionate fondness in Senate-houses, in Battle-fields, nay even in Kings' Antechambers; forgetting, that far away from such scenes, the mighty tide of Thought and Action was still rolling on its wondrous course, in gloom and brightness; and in its thousand remote valleys, a whole world of Existence, with or without an earthly sun of Happiness to warm it, with or without a heavenly sun of Holiness to purify and sanctify it, was blossoming and fading, whether the 'famous victory' were won or lost. The time seems coming when much of this must be amended; and he who sees no world but that of courts and camps; and writes only how soldiers were drilled and shot, and how this ministerial conjuror out-conjured that other, and then guided, or at least held, something which he called the rudder of Government, but which was rather the spigot of Taxation, wherewith, in place of steering, he could tap, and the more cunningly the nearer the lees,—will pass for a more or less instructive Gazetteer, but will no longer be called a Historian.

However, the Political Historian, were his work performed with all conceivable perfection, can accomplish but a part, and still leaves room for numerous fellow-labourers. Foremost among these comes the Ecclesiastical Historian; endeavouring, with catholic or sectarian view, to trace the progress of the Church; of that portion of the social establishments, which respects our religious condition; as the other portion does our civil, or rather, in the long-run, our economical condition. Rightly conducted, this department were undoubtedly the more important of the

two; inasmuch as it concerns us more to understand how man's moral well-being had been and might be promoted, than to understand in the like sort his physical well-being; which latter is ultimately the aim of all Political arrangements. For the physically happiest is simply the safest, the strongest; and, in all conditions of Government, Power (whether of wealth as in these days, or of arms and adherents as in old days) is the only outward emblem and purchase-money of Good. True Good, however, unless we reckon Pleasure synonymous with it, is said to be rarely, or rather never, offered for sale in the market where that coin passes current. So that, for man's true advantage, not the outward condition of his life, but the inward and spiritual, is of prime influence; not the form of Government he lives under, and the power he can accumulate there, but the Church he is a member of, and the degree of moral elevation he can acquire by means of its instruction. Church History, then, did it speak wisely, would have momentous secrets to teach us: nay, in its highest degree, it were a sort of continued Holy Writ; our Sacred Books being, indeed, only a History of the primeval Church, as it first arose in man's soul, and symbolically embodied itself in his external life. How far our actual Church Historians fall below such unattainable standards, nay below quite attainable approximations thereto, we need not point out. Of the Ecclesiastical Historian we have to complain, as we did of his Political fellow-craftsman, that his inquiries turn rather on the outward mechanism, the mere hulls and superficial accidents of the object, than on the object itself: as if the Church lay in Bishops' Chapter-houses, and Ecumenic Council-halls, and Cardinals' Conclaves, and not far more in the hearts of Believing Men; in whose walk and conversation, as influenced thereby, its chief manifestations were to be looked for, and its progress or decline ascertained. The History of the Church is a History of the Invisible as well as of the Visible Church; which latter, if disjoined from the former, is but a vacant edifice; gilded, it may be, and overhung with old votive gifts, yet useless, nay pestilentially unclean; to write whose history is less important than to forward its downfall.

Of a less ambitious character are the Histories that relate to special separate provinces of human Action; to Sciences, Practical Arts, Institutions and the like; matters which do not imply an epitome of man's whole interest and form of life; but

wherein, though each is still connected with all, the spirit of each, at least its material results, may be in some degree evolved without so strict a reference to that of the others. Highest in dignity and difficulty, under this head, would be our histories of Philosophy, of man's opinions and theories respecting the nature of his Being, and relations to the Universe Visible and Invisible: which History, indeed, were it fitly treated, or fit for right treatment, would be a province of Church History; the logical or dogmatical province thereof; for Philosophy, in its true sense, is or should be the soul, of which Religion, Worship is the body; in the healthy state of things the Philosopher and Priest were one and the same. But Philosophy itself is far enough from wearing this character; neither have its Historians been men, generally speaking, that could in the smallest degree approximate it thereto. Scarcely since the rude era of the Magi and Druids has that same healthy identification of Priest and Philosopher had place in any country: but rather the worship of divine things, and the scientific investigation of divine things, have been in quite different hands, their relations not friendly but hostile. Neither have the Brückers and Bühles, to say nothing of the many unhappy Enfields who have treated of that latter department, been more than barren reporters, often unintelligent and unintelligible reporters, of the doctrine uttered; without force to discover how the doctrine originated, or what reference it bore to its time and country, to the spiritual position of mankind there and then. Nay, such a task did not perhaps lie before them, as a thing to be attempted.

Art also and Literature are intimately blended with Religion; as it were, outworks and abutments, by which that highest pinnacle in our inward world gradually connects itself with the general level, and becomes accessible therefrom. He who should write a proper History of Poetry, would depict for us the successive Revelations which man had obtained of the Spirit of Nature; under what aspects he had caught and endeavoured to body forth some glimpse of that unspeakable Beauty, which in its highest clearness is Religion, is the inspiration of a Prophet, yet in one or the other degree must inspire every true Singer, were his theme never so humble. We should see by what steps men had ascended to the Temple; how near they had approached; by what ill hap they had, for long periods, turned away from it, and grovelled on the plain with no music

in the air, or blindly struggled towards other heights. That among all our Eichhorns and Wartons there is no such Historian, must be too clear to every one. Nevertheless let us not despair of far nearer approaches to that excellence. Above all, let us keep the Ideal of it ever in our eye; for thereby alone have we even a chance to reach it.

Our histories of Laws and Constitutions, wherein many a Montesquieu and Hallam has laboured with acceptance, are of a much simpler nature; yet deep enough if thoroughly investigated; and useful, when authentic, even with little depth. Then we have Histories of Medicine, of Mathematics, of Astronomy, Commerce, Chivalry, Monkery; and Goguets and Beckmanns have come forward with what might be the most bountiful contribution of all, a History of Inventions. Of all which sorts, and many more not here enumerated, not yet devised and put in practice, the merit and the proper scheme may, in our present limits, require no exposition.

In this manner, though, as above remarked, all Action is extended three ways, and the general sum of human Action is a whole Universe, with all limits of it unknown, does History strive by running path after path, through the Impassable, in manifold directions and intersections, to secure for us some oversight of the Whole; in which endeavour, if each Historian look well around him from his path, tracking it out with the *eye*, not, as is more common, with the *nose*, she may at last prove not altogether unsuccessful. Praying only that increased division of labour do not here, as elsewhere, aggravate our already strong Mechanical tendencies, so that in the manual dexterity for parts we lose all command over the whole, and the hope of any Philosophy of History be farther off than ever, —let us all wish her great and greater success.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER'S REVIEW OF MADAME DE STAEL'S 'ALLEMAGNE.'[1]

[1830.]

*** There are few of our readers but have read and partially admired Madame de Staël's *Germany;* the work, indeed, which, with all its vagueness and manifold shortcomings, must be regarded as the precursor, if not parent, of whatever acquaintance with German Literature exists among us. There are few also but have heard of Jean Paul, here and elsewhere, as of a huge mass of intellect, with the strangest shape and structure, yet with thews and sinews like a real Son of Anak. Students of German Literature will be curious to see such a critic as Madame de Staël adequately criticised, in what fashion the best of the Germans write reviews, and what worth the best of them acknowledge in this their chief eulogist and indicator among foreigners. We translate the Essay from Richter's *Kleine Bücherschau*, as it stands there reprinted from the Heidelberg *Jahrbücher*, in which periodical it first appeared, in 1815. We have done our endeavour to preserve the quaint grotesque style so characteristic of Jean Paul; rendering with literal fidelity whatever stood before us, rugged and unmanageable as it often seemed. This article on Madame de Staël passes, justly enough, for the best of his reviews; which, however, let our readers understand, are no important part of his writings. This is not the lion that we see, but only a claw of the lion, whereby some few may recognise him.

To review a Revieweress of two literary Nations is not easy; for you have, as it were, three things at once to give account of. With regard to France and Germany, however, it is chiefly in reference to the judgment which the intellectual Amazon of these two countries has pro-

[1] Fraser's Magazine, Nos. 1 and 4.

nounced on them, and thereby on herself, that they come before us here. To write such a *Literary Gazette* of our whole literary Past, enacting editor and so many contributors in a single person, not to say a female one; above all, summoning and spell-binding the spirits of German philosophy,—this, it must be owned, would have been even for a Villers, though Villers can now retranslate himself from German into French, no unheroic undertaking. Meanwhile, Madame de Staël had this advantage, that she writes specially for Frenchmen; who, knowing about German art and the German language simply nothing, still gain somewhat, when they learn never so little. On this subject you can scarcely tell them other truths than new ones, whether pleasant or not. They even know more of the English,—as these do of them,—than of the Germans. Our invisibility among the French proceeds, it may be hoped, like that of Mercury, from our proximity to the Sun-god; but in regard to other countries, we should consider, that the constellation of our New Literature having risen only half a century ago, the rays of it are still on the road thither.

Greatly in favour of our Authoress, in this her picture of Germany, was her residence among us; and the title-page might be translated 'Letters *from* Germany' (*de l'Allemagne*), as well as *on* Germany. We Germans are in the habit of limning Paris and London from the distance; which capitals do sit to us, truly,—but only on the bookstall of their works. For the deeper knowledge of a national poetry, not only the poems are necessary, but the poets, at least their country and countrymen: the living multitude are *notæ variorum* to the poem. A German himself could write his best work on French poetry nowhere but in Paris. Now our Authoress, in her acquaintance with the greatest German Poets, had, as it were, a living translation of their poems; and Weimar, the focus of German poesy, might be to her what Paris were to the German reviewer of the Parisian.

But what chiefly exalts her to be our critic, and a poetess herself, is the feeling she manifests: with a taste sufficiently French, her heart is German and poetic. When she says,[2]

'Toutes les fois que de nos jours on a pu faire entrer un peu de sève étrangère, les Français y ont applaudi avec transport. J. J. Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Chateaubriand, &c. &c., dans quelques-uns de leurs ouvrages, sont tous, même a leur insçu, de l'école germanique, c'est a dire, qu'ils ne puisent leur talent que dans le fond de leur âme;'

she might have classed her own works first on the list. Everywhere she breathes the æther of higher sentiments than the marsh-miasma of *Salons* and French Materialism could support. The chapters, in Volume Sixth, on philosophy, depict what is Germanism of head badly enough, indeed; but the more warmly and justly what is Germanism of heart, with a pure clearness not unworthy of a Herder.

For the French, stript bare by encyclopedists, and revolutionists, and conscripts, and struggling under heart-ossification, and contraction of the

[2] Tom. ii. p. 6.

breast, such German news of a separation and independence between Virtue and Self-Interest, Beauty and Utility, &c. will not come too late: a lively people, for whom pleasure or pain, as daylight or cloudy weather, often hide the upper starry heaven, can at least use star-catalogues, and some planisphere thereof. Many are the jewel-gleams with which she illuminates the depths of the soul against the Gallic lownesses. Of this sort are, for instance, the passages where[3] she refuses to have the Madonna of Beauty made a housemaid of Utility; where she asks, Why Nature has clothed, not the nutritive plants, but only the useless flowers with charms?

'D'où vient, cependant, que pour parer l'autel de la Divinité, on chercherait plutôt les inutiles fleurs que les productions nécessaires? D'où vient que ce qui sert au maintien de votre vie aie moins de dignité que les fleurs sans but? C'est que le beau nous rappelle une existence immortelle et divine, dont le souvenir et le regret vivent a la fois dans notre cœur.'

Also[4] the passages where, in contradiction to the principle that places the essence of Art in imitation of Reality, she puts the question:

'Le premier des arts, la musique, qu'imite-t-il? De tous les dons de la Divinité, cependant, c'est le plus magnifique, car il semble, pour ainsi dire, superflu. Le soleil nous éclaire, nous respirons l'air du ciel serein, toutes les beautés de la nature servent en quelque façon à l'homme; la musique seule est d'une noble inutilité, et c'est pour cela qu'elle nous émeut si profondement; plus elle est loin de tout but, plus elle se rapproche de cette source intime de nos pensées que l'application à un objet quelconque réserre dans son cours.'

So, likewise, is she the protecting goddess of the higher feelings in love; and the whole Sixth Volume is an altar of religion, which the Gallic pantheon will not be the worse for. Though professing herself a proselyte of the new poetic school, she is a mild judge of sentimentality;[5] and in no case can immoral freedom in the thing represented excuse itself in her eyes, as perhaps it might in those of this same new school, by the art displayed in representing it. Hence comes her too-narrow ill-will against Goethe's *Faust* and *Ottilie*. Thus, also, she extends her *just* anger against a faithlessly luxuriating love, in Goethe's *Stella*, to *unjust* anger against Jacobi's *Woldemar;* mistaking in this latter the hero's struggle after a free disencumbered friendship for the heart-luxury of weakness. Yet the accompanying passage[6] is a fine and true one:

'On ne doit pas se mettre par son choix dans une situation où la morale et la sensibilité ne sont pas d'accord; car ce qui est involontaire est si beau, qu'il est affreux d'être condamné à se commander toutes ses actions, et a vivre avec soi-même comme avec sa victime.'

She dwells so much in the heart, as the bee in the flower-cup, that, like this honey-maker, she sometimes lets the tulip-leaves overshadow her and shut her in. Thus she not only declares against the learning (that is, the harmonics and inharmonics) in our German music, but also against our German parallelism between tone and word,—our German

[3] Tom. v. p. 100.
[4] Tom. v. p. 101.
[5] Tom. v. ch. 18.
[6] Page 180.

individuation of tones and words. Instrumental music of itself is too much for her; mere reflection, letter and science: she wants only voices, not words.[7] But the sort of souls which take in the pure impression of tones without knowledge of speech, dwell in the inferior animals. Do not we always furnish the tones we hear with secret texts of our own, nay with secret scenery, that their echo within us may be stronger than their voice without? And can our heart feel by other means than being spoken to and answering? Thus pictures, during music, are seen-into more deeply and warmly by spectators; nay many masters have, in creating them, acknowledged help from music. All beauties serve each other without jealousy; for to conquer man's heart is the common purpose of all.

As it was for France that our Authoress wrote and shaped her *Germany*, one does not at first see how, with her depth of feeling, she could expect to prosper much there. But Reviewer[8] answereth: The female half she will please at once and immediately; the male, again, by the twofold mediation of art and mockery. First, by art. Indifferent as the Parisian is to religion and deep feeling on the firm ground of the household floor, he likes mightily to see them bedded on the soft fluctuating clouds of art; as court-people like peasants on the stage, Dutch dairies in pictures, and Swiss scenes on the plate at dinner; nay they want gods more than they do God, whom, indeed, it is art that first raises to the rank of the gods. High sentiments and deep emotions, which the court at supper must scruple to express as real, can speak out loud and frankly on the court-theatre a little while before. Besides, what is not to be slighted, by a moderated indifference and aversion to true feelings, there is opened the freer room and variety for the representation and show thereof; as we may say, the Emperor Constantine first abolished the punishment of the cross, but on all hands loaded churches and statues with the figure of it.

Here too is another advantage, which whoever likes can reckon in: That certain higher and purer emotions do service to the true earthly ones in the way of foil; as haply,—if a similitude much fitter for a satire than for a review may be permitted,—the thick ham by its tender

[7] Tom. iv. pp. 123-125.

[8] The imperial 'we' is unknown in German reviewing: the '*Recensent*' must there speak in his own poor third person singular; nay stingy printers are in the habit of curtailing him into mere '*Rez.*,' and without any article: '*Rez.* thinks,' '*Rez.* says,' as if the unhappy man were uttering *affidavits* in a tremulous half-guilty attitude, not criticisms *ex cathedrâ*, and oftentimes *inflatis buccis!* The German reviewer, too, is expected in many cases, to understand something of his subject; and, at all events, to have read his book. Happy England! Were there a bridge built hither, not only all the women in the world, as a wit has said, but faster than they, all the reviewers in the world, would hasten over to us, to exchange their toilsome mud-shovels for light kingly sceptres; and English Literature were one boundless, self-devouring *Review*, and (as in London routs) you had to *do* nothing, but only to *see* others do nothing.—T.

flowers, or the boar's-head by the citrons in its snout, rather gains than loses.

And though all this went for nothing, still must the religious enthusiasm of our Authoress affect the Parisian and man of the world with a second charm; namely, with the genuine material which lies therein, as well as in any tragedy, for conversational parody. Indeed, those same religious, old-fashioned, sentimental dispositions must, as the *persiflage* thereof has already grown somewhat threadbare and meritless,—they must, if jesting on them is to betoken spirit, be from time to time warmed-up anew by some writer, or still better, by some writeress, of genius.

With the charm of sensibility our gifted eulogist combines, as hinted above, another advantage which may well gain the Parisians for her; namely, the advantage of a true French,—not German,—taste in poetry.

She must, the Reviewer hopes, have satisfied the impartial Parisian by this general sentence, were there nothing more.[9]

'Le grand avantage qu'on peut tirer de l'étude de la littérature allemande, c'est le mouvement d'émulation qu'elle donne; il faut y chercher des forces pour composer soi-même plutôt que des ouvrages tout fait, qu'on puisse transporter ailleurs.'

This thought, which[10] she has more briefly expressed:

'Ce sera presque toujours un chef-d'œuvre qu'une invention étrangère arrangée par un Français,'—

she demonstrates[11] by the words:

'On ne sait pas faire un livre en Allemagne; rarement on y met l'ordre et la méthode qui classent les idées dans la tête du lecteur; et ce n'est point parceque les Français sont impatiens, mais parcequ'ils ont l'esprit juste, qu'ils se fatiguent de ce défaut: les fictions ne sont pas dessinées dans les poésies allemandes avec ces contours fermes et précis qui en assurent l'effet; et le vague de l'imagination correspond a l'obscurité de la pensée.'

In short, our Muses'-hill, as also the other Muses'-hills, the English, the Greek, the Roman, the Spanish, are simply,—what no Frenchman can question,—so many mountain-stairs and terraces, fashioned on various slopes, whereby the Gallic Olympus-Parnassus may, from this side and that, be conveniently reached. As to us Germans in particular, she might express herself so: German works of art can be employed as colour-sheds, and German poets as colour-grinders, by the French pictorial school; as, indeed, from of old our learned lights have been by the French, not adored like light-stars, but stuck into like light-chafers, as people carry those of Surinam, spitted through, for lighting of roads. Frankly will the Frenchman forgive our Authoress her German or British heart, when he finds, in the chapters on the 'classical' and 'romantic' art of poetry, how little this has corrupted or cooled her taste, to the prejudice of the Gallic art of writing. After simply saying,[12]

'La nation français, la plus cultivée des nations latines, penche vers la poésie imitée des Grecs et des Romains,'

[9] Tom. iv. p. 86.
[10] Page 45.
[11] Page 11.
[12] Tom. ii. p. 60.

she expresses this[13] much better and more distinctly in these words:

'La poésie française étant la plus classique de toutes les poésies modernes, elle est la seule qui ne soit pas répandue parmi le peuple.'

Now Tasso, Calderon, Camoens, Shakspeare, Goethe, continues she, are sung by their respective peoples, even by the lowest classes; whereas it is to be lamented that, indeed,

'Nos poètes français sont admirés par tout ce qu'il y a d'esprits cultivés chez nous et dans le RESTE de l'Europe; mais ils sont tout-à-fait inconnus aux gens de peuple, et aux bourgeois même des villes, parceque les arts en France ne sont pas, comme ailleurs, natifs du pays même où leurs beautés se développent.'

And there is no Frenchman but will readily subscribe this confession. The Reviewer too, though a German, allows the French a similarity to the Greek and Latin classics; nay a greater than any existing people can exhibit; and recognises them willingly as the newest Ancients. He even goes so far, that he equals their Literature, using a quite peculiar and inverse principle of precedency among the classical ages, to the best age of Greek and Latin Literature, namely, to the *iron*. For as the figurative names, 'golden,' 'iron age,' of themselves signify, considering that gold, a very ductile rather than a useful metal, is found everywhere, and on the surface, even in rivers, and without labour; whereas the firm iron, serviceable not as a symbol and for its splendour, is rare in gold-countries, and gained only in depths and with toil, and seldom in a metallic state: so likewise, among literary ages, an iron one designates the practical utility and laborious nature of the work done, as well as the cunning workmanship bestowed on it; whereby it is clear, that not till the golden and silver ages are done, can the iron one come to maturity. Always one age produces and fashions the next: on the golden stands the silver; this forms the brass; and on the shoulders of all stands the iron. Thus too, our Authoress[14] testifies that the elder French, Montaigne and the rest, were so very like the present Germans,[15] while the younger had not yet grown actually classical; as it were, the end-flourishes and cadences of the past. On which grounds the French classics cannot, without injustice, be paralleled to any earlier Greek classics than to those of the Alexandrian school. Among the Latin classics their best prototypes may be such as Ovid, Pliny the younger, Martial, the two Senecas, Lucan,—though he, more by date than spirit, has been reckoned under our earlier periods; inasmuch as these Romans do, as it were by anticipation, arm and adorn themselves with the brass and iron, not yet come into universal use. A Rousseau would sound in Latin as silvery as a Seneca; Seneca would sound in French as golden as a Rousseau.

Nevertheless, it is an almost universal error in persons who speak of French critics, to imagine that a Géoffroy or a Laharpe, in equalling his countrymen to the ancient classics, means the classics of the so-called

[13] Page 63. [14] Tom. iv. p. 80.

[15] The same thing Jean Paul had long ago remarked in his *Vorschule*, book iii. sec. 779, of the Second Edition.

golden age. But what real French classic would take it as praise if you told him that he wrote quite like Homer, like Æschylus, like Aristophanes, like Plato, like Cicero? Without vanity, he might give you to understand, that some small difference would surely be found between those same golden classics and him, which, indeed, was to be referred rather to the higher culture of the time than to his own; whereby he might hope that in regard to various *longueurs*, instances of tastelessness, coarseness, he had less to answer for than many an Ancient. A French tragedy-writer might say, for example, that he flattered himself, if he could not altogether equal the so-named tragic Seven Stars of Alexandria, he still differed a little from the *Seven* of Æschylus. Indeed, Voltaire and others, in their letters, tell us plainly enough, that the writers of the ancient golden age are nowise like them, or specially to their mind.

The genuine French taste of our Authoress displays itself also in detached manifestations; for example. in the armed neutrality which, in common with the French and people of the world, she maintains towards the middle ranks. Peasants and Swiss, indeed, make their appearance, idyl-wise, in French Literature; and a shepherd is as good as a shepherdess. Artists too are admitted by these people; partly as the sort of undefined comets that gyrate equally through suns, earths and satellites; partly as the individual servants of their luxury; and an actress in person is often as dear to them as the part she plays. But as to the middle rank,—excepting perhaps the clergyman, who in the pulpit belongs to the artist guild, and in Catholic countries, without rank of his own, traverses all ranks,—not only are handicraftsmen incapable of poetic garniture, but the entire class of men of business, your Commerce-*Raths*, Legation, Justice, and other *Raths*, and two-thirds of the whole Address calendar. In short, French human nature produces and sets forth, in its works of art, nothing worse than princes, heroes and nobility: no ground-work and side-work of people; as the trees about Naples shade you, when sitting under them, simply with blossoms, not with leaves, because they have none. This air of pedigree, without which the French Parnassus receiveth no one, Madame de Staël also appears to require, and, by her unfavourable sentence, to feel the want of in Voss's *Luise*, in his *Idyls*, in Goethe's *Dorothea*, in *Meister* and *Faust*. There is too little gentility in them. Tieck's *Sternbald* finds favour, perhaps not less for its treating of *artists*, than by reason of its unpoetical yet pleasing generalities; for the book is rather a *wish* of art, than a *work* of art.

The theatre is, as it were, the *ichnography* (ground-plan) of a people; the prompter's-hole (*souffleurs*) is the speaking-trumpet of its peculiarities. Our Authoress, in exalting the Gallic *coulisses*, and stage-curtains, and candle-snuffers, and *souffleurs* of their tragic and comic ware, above all foreign theatres, gives the French another and a gratifying proof of her taste being similar to theirs.

After so many preliminaries, the reader will doubtless expect th

conclusion that our Authoress does prove the wished-for mediatrix between us and France, and in the end procures us a literary general pardon from the latter ; nay, that the French are even a little obliged to her for this approximation. But quite the contrary is the Reviewer's opinion.

On the whole, he cannot help sympathising with the French, whom such diluted, filtered extracts and versions from the German must delude into belief of a certain regularity in us, whereof there is no trace extant. Thus, for example, our Authoress begins *Faust* with this passage :

'C'est a nous de nous plonger dans le tumulte de l'activité, dans ces vagues éternelles de la vie, que la naissance et la mort élèvent et précipitent, repoussent et ramènent : nous sommes faits pour travailler a l'œuvre que Dieu nous recommande, et dont le tems accomplit la trame. Mais toi, qui ne peux concevoir que toi-même, toi, qui trembles en approfondissant ta destinée, et que mon souffle fait tressaillir, laisse-moi, ne me rappelle plus.'

How shall a Frenchman, persuaded perhaps by such smooth samples to study German, guess, that before this passage could become arable, the following tangle grew on it :

'DER GEIST.

In Lebensfluthen, im Thatensturm
Wall' ich auf und ab,
Wehe hin und her !
Geburt und Grab
Ein ewiges Meer,
Ein wechselnd Weben,
Ein glühend Leben,
So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit,
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.

FAUST.

Der du die weite Welt umschweifst,
Geschäftiger Geist, wie nah' fühl' ich mich dir !

DER GEIST.

Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst,
Nicht mir !' [16]

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[16] Here is an English version, as literal as we can make it :

'THE SPIRIT.

In Existence' floods, in Action's storm,
I walk and work, above, beneath,
Work and weave, in endless motion
Birth and death,
An infinite ocean,
A seizing and giving
The fire of living :

So, indeed, is the whole *Faust* of Madame de Staël ; all fire-colour bleached out of it ; giant masses and groups, for example the *Walpurgisnacht* (Mayday Night), altogether cut away.

The following passage (*Siebenkäs*,[17] book i. sec. 7) occurs in 'the Speech of the dead Christ from the Universe' (*Songe*, she more briefly translates the title of it), where Christ, after saying that there is no God, thus continues :

'I travelled through the worlds, I mounted into the suns, and flew with the galaxies through the wastes of heaven ; but there is no God. I descended as far as Being casts it shadow, and looked into the Abyss, and cried : Father, where art thou? but I heard only the eternal storm, which no one guides ; and the gleaming Rainbow from the west, without a Sun that made it, stood over the Abyss, and trickled down. And when I looked up towards the immeasurable world for the Divine *eye*, it glared down on me with an empty, black, bottomless *eye-socket ;* and Eternity lay upon Chaos, eating it, and re-eating-it. Cry on, ye discords! cry away the shadows, for He is not!'

These barbaresque sentences have, like all the rest, grown into the following cultivated ones :

'J'ai parcouru les mondes, je me suis élevé au-dessus de soleils, et la aussi il n'est point de Dieu ; je suis descendu jusqu'aux dernières limites de l'univers, j'ai regardé dans l'abîme, et je me suis écrié : Père, où es-tu? mais je n'ai entendu que la pluie qui tombait goutte a goutte dans l'abîme, et l'éternelle tempête, que nul ordre ne régit, n'a seule répondu. Relevant ensuite mes regards vers la voûte des cieux, je n'y ai trouvé qu'une ORBITE VIDE, noire, et sans fond. L'éternité reposait sur le chaos, et le rongeait, et se dévorait lentement elle-même : redoublez vos plaintes amères et déchirantes ; que des cris aigus dispersent les ombres, car c'en est fait.'

He that loves the French must lament that people should decoy them over to us with beauties which are merely painted on with rouge ; and should hide not only our fungous excrescences, but our whole adiposity in wide Gallic court-clothes. For, as Goethe's *Faust* actually stands, every good Frenchman, outdoing our Authoress, who wishes no second, must wish the first—at Mephistopheles ; and look upon this written hell-journey as an acted Empedocles one into the crater of the German Muse-volcano. To our Authoress he might even say : "Madame, you had too much sense to lend your Germans any of those *traits*, *pointes*, *sentences*, that *esprit*, wherewith our writers have so long enchanted us and Europe. *You* showed us, in the German works, their

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'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou seest him by.

FAUST.

Thou who the wide world round outflowest,
Unresting Spirit, how I resemble thee!

THE SPIRIT.

Thou canst resemble spirits whom thou knowest,
Not me!'—T.

[17] By Jean Paul himself.—T.

brightest side, their *sensibilité*, the depth of their feelings. You have quite allured us with it. All that offended your taste, you have softened or suppressed, and given us yourself instead of the poem: *tant mieux!* But who will give us *you*, when we read these German works in the original? Jean Jacques says, Let science come, and not the deceiving doctor. We invert it, and say, Let the healing doctoress come, and not the sick poem, till she have healed it."

The Reviewer observes here, that in the foregoing apostrophe there is as cramp a eulogy as that[18] with which Madame de Staël concludes hers on Schiller:

'Peu de tems après la première représentation de Guillaume Tell, le trait mortel atteignit aussi le digne auteur de ce bel ouvrage. Gesler périt au moment où les desseins les plus cruels l'occupaient: Schiller n'avait dans son âme que de généreuses pensées. Ces deux volontés si contraires, la mort, ennemie de tous les projets de l'homme, les a de même brisées.'

This comparison of the shot Gesler with the deceased Schiller, wherein the similarity of the two men turns on their resembling other men in dying, and thereby having their plans interrupted, seems a delicate imitation of Captain Fluellen, who (in *Henry V.*) struggles to prove that Alexander of Macedon and Henry Monmouth are in more than one point like each other.

But to return. Were this castrated edition of the German Hercules, or Poetic God, which Madame de Staël has edited of us, desirable, and of real use for any reader, it would be for German courts, and courtiers themselves: who knows but such a thing might prove the light little flame[19] to indicate the heavy treasure of their native country; which treasure, as they, unlike the French, have all learned German first, they could find no difficulty in digging out. But with such shows of possible union between two altogether different churches, or temples of taste, never let the good, too-credulous French be lured and balked!

Nay, the cunning among them may hit our Authoress with her own hand; for she has written:[20]

'Les auteurs français de l'ancien tems ont en général plus de rapports avec les Allemands que les écrivains du siècle de Louis XIV; car c'est depuis ce tems-là que la littérature française a pris une direction classique.'

And shall we now, he may say, again grow to similarity in culture with those whom we resembled when we had a less degree of it? A German may, indeed, prefer the elder French poetry to the newer French verse; but no Frenchman can leave his holy temple for an antiquated tabernacle of testimony, much less for a mere modern synagogue. The clear water of their poetry will ever exclude, as buoyant and unmixable, the dark fire-holding oil of ours. Or to take it otherwise: as with them the eye is everywhere the ruling organ, and with

[18] Tom. iii. p. 97.

[19] The 'little blue flame,' the '*Springwurzel*' (start-root), &c. &c., are well-known phenomena in miners' magic.—T.

[20] Tom. iv. p. 80.

us the ear; so they, hard of hearing, will retain their poet-peacock, with his glittering tail-mirrors[21] and tail-eyes, drawn back fan-like to the wings, his poor tones and feet notwithstanding; and we, short of sight, will think our unshowy poet-larks and nightingales, with their songs in the clouds and the blossoms, the preferable blessing. Perhaps in the whole of Goethe there are not to be found so many antitheses and witty reflexes as in one moving act of Voltaire; and in all, even the finest cantos of the *Messias*, the Frenchman seeks in vain for such *pointes* as in the *Henriade* exalt every canto, every page, into a perfect holly-bush.

And now, the Reviewer begs to know of any impartial man, What joy shall a Frenchman have in literatures and arts of poetry which advance on him as naked as unfallen Eves or Graces,—he, who is just come from a poet-*assemblée*, where every one has his communion-coat, his mourning-coat, nay his winding-sheet, trimmed with tassels and tags, and properly perfumed? What will a Fabre d'Olivet[22] say to such eulogising of a foreign literature? he who has so pointedly and distinctly declared:

'Oui, messieurs, ce que l'Indostan fut pour l'Asie, la France le doit être pour l'Europe. La langue française, comme la Sanscrite, doit tendre a l'universalité, elle doit s'enrichir de toutes les connaissances acquises dans les siècles passés, afin de les transmettre aux siècles futurs; destinée a surnoyer sur les débris de cent IDIOMES diverses, elle doit pouvoir sauver du naufrage des tempes toutes leurs beautés, et toutes leurs productions remarquables.'

When even a De Staël, with all her knowledge of our language and authors, and with a heart inclined to us, continues nevertheless Gallic in tongue and taste, what blossom-crop are we to look for from the dry timber? For, on the whole, the taste of a people is altogether to be discriminated from the taste of a period: the latter, not the former, easily changes. The taste of a people, rooted down, through centuries, in the nature of the country, in its history, in the whole soul of the body politic, withstands, though under new forms of resistance, all alterations and attacks from without. For this taste is, in its highest sense, nothing other than the outcome and utterance of the inward combination of the man, revealing itself most readily by act and judgment in art, as in that which speaks with all the faculties of man, and to all the faculties of man. Thus poetical taste belongs to the heart: the understanding possesses only the small domain of *rhetorical* taste, which can be learned and proved, and gives its verdict on correctness, language, congruity of images, and the like.

For the rest, if a foreign literature is really to be made a saline manure and fertilising compost for the withered French literature, some

[21] In French poetry, you must always, like the Christian, consider the latter end, or the last verse; and there, as in life, according to the maxim of the Greek sage, you cannot before the end be called happy.

[22] His *Les Vers Dorés du Pythagore expliqués, &c., précédés d'un Discours sur l'Essence de Poésie*, 1814.

altogether different path must be fallen upon than this ridiculous circuit of clipping the Germans into Frenchmen, that these may take pattern by them; of first fashioning us down to the French, that they may fashion themselves up to us. Place, and plant down, and encamp, the Germans with all their stout limbs and full arteries, like dying gladiators, fairly before them;—let them then study these figures as an academy, or refuse to do it. Even to the Gallic speech, in this transference, let utmost boldness be recommended. How else, if not in a similar way, have we Germans worked our former national taste into a free taste; so that by our skill in languages, or our translations, we have welcomed a Homer, Shakspeare, Dante, Calderon, Tasso, with all their peculiarities, repugnant enough to ours, and introduced them undisarmed into the midst of us? Our national taste meanwhile was not lost in this process: in the German, with all its pliability, there is still something indeclinable for other nations; Goethe, and Herder, and Klopstock, and Lessing, can be enjoyed to perfection in no tongue but the German; and not only our æsthetic cosmopolitism (universal friendship), but also our popular individuality, distinguishes us from all other peoples.

If, one day, we are to be presented to foreign countries,—and every German, proud as he may be, will desire it, if he is a bookseller,—the Reviewer could wish much for an Author like our Authoress, to transport us, in such a Cleopatra's ship as hers, into England. Schiller, Goethe, Klinger, Hippel, Lichtenberg, Haller, Kleist, might, simply as they were, in their *naturalibus* and *pontificalibus*, disembark in that Island, without danger of becoming hermits, except in so far as hermits may be worshipped there.

On the *romantic*[23] side, however, we could not wish the Briton to cast his first glance at us: for the Briton,—to whom nothing is so poetical as the commonweal,—requires (being used to the weight of gold), even for a golden age of poetry, the thick golden wing-covers of his epithet-poets; not the transparent gossamer wings of the Romanticists; no many-coloured butterfly-dust; but, at lowest, flower-dust that will grow to something.

But though this gifted Inspectress of Germany has done us little furtherance with the French, nay perhaps hindrance, inasmuch as she has spoken forth our praise needlessly in mere comparisons with the French, instead of speaking it without offensive allusions,—the better service can she do us with another people, namely, with the Germans themselves.

In this respect, not only in the first place may the critic, but also in the second place the patriot, return her his thanks. It is not the outward man, but the inward, that needs mirrors. We cannot wholly see ourselves except in the eye of a foreign seer. The Reviewer would be happy to see and enter a mirror-gallery, or rather picture-gallery, in

[23] *Romantisch*, 'romantic,' it will be observed, is here used in a scientific sense, and has no concern with the writing or reading (or acting) of 'romances.'—T.

which our faces, limned by quite different nations, by Portuguese, by Scotchmen, by Russians, Corsicans, were hanging up, and where we might learn how differently we looked to eyes that were different. By comparison with foreign peculiarity, our own peculiarity discerns and ennobles itself. Thus, for example, our Authoress, profitably for us, holds up and reflects our German *longueurs* (interminabilities), our dull jesting, our fanaticism and our German indifference to the file.

Against the last error,—against the rule-of-thumb *style* of these days,—reviewers collectively ought really to fire and slash with an especial fury. There was a time in Germany, when a Lessing, a Winkelmann, filed their periods like Plato or Cicero, and Klopstock and Schiller their verses like Virgil or Horace; when, as Tacitus, we thought more of disleafing than of covering with leaves; in short, of a disleafing which, as in the vine, ripens and incites the grapes. There was such a time, but the present has *had* it; and we now write, and paint, and patch straight forward, as it comes to hand, and study readers and writers not much, but appear in print. Corrections, at present, seem as costly to us, as if, like Count Alfiera, we had them to make on printing-paper, at the charges of our printer and purse. The public book-market is to be our bleach-green; and the public, instead of us, is to correct; and then, in the second edition, we can pare off somewhat, and clap on somewhat.

But it is precisely this late correction, when the former author, with his former mood and love, is no longer forthcoming, that works with dubious issue. Thus Schiller justly left his *Robbers* unaltered. On the other hand, the same sun-warmth of creation can, in a second hour, return as a sun-warmth of ripening. Writers who mean to pay the world only in *plated* coins can offer no shadow of reason for preferring first thoughts; since the very thought they write down must, in their heads, during that minute's space, have already gone through several improved editions.

Still deeper thanks than those of the critic to our Authoress let the patriot give her. Through the whole work there runs a veiled sorrow that Germany should be found kneeling, and, like the camel, raise itself still bent and heavy-laden. Hence her complaints[24] that the present Germans have only a philosophical and no political character;—farther, that the German,[25] even through his moderate climate, in which he has not the extremes of heat and cold to encounter, but without acquirement of hardiness easily secures himself against evils of an equable nature, should be softening into unwarlike effeminacy;—farther, those other complaints,[26] about our division of ranks, our deficiency in diplomatic craft and lying; about the German great, who, to the tedium of the French themselves, still take an interest in Louis Fourteenth's mistresses and anecdotes.[27] Thus she says,[28]

'Les Allemands ont besoin de dédaigner pour devenir les plus forts;'

[24] Tom. v. ch. 11. [25] Tom. i. p. 20. [26] Tom. i. ch. 2.
[27] Tom. i. ch. 9. [28] Tom. v. p. 200.

and, two lines lower,

'Ce sont les seuls hommes, peut-être, auxquels on pouvait conseiller l'orgueil comme un moyen de devenir meilleurs.'

She is almost right. Not as if, one towards another, and in words, we did not set ourselves forward, and take airs enough, on printed paper; —each stands beside the others with a ready-plaited garland for him in his hand;—but in actions, and towards foreigners and persons in authority, it is still to be lamented that we possess but two cheeks for the receiving of cuffs, in place of four, like the Janus-head; although, in this cheek-deficiency, we do mend matters a little, when we—turn round, and get the remainder. During the French war, and in the peace before it, there were many statesmen, if not states also, that considered themselves mere *half-stuff*, as rags in the paper-mill are called when they are not cut small enough,—till once they were ennobled into *whole-stuff*, when the *devil* (so, in miller-speech, let Napoleon's sceptre be named) had altogether hacked them into finest shreds.

In vol. v. p. 123, is a long harsh passage, where the German subserviency is rated worse than the Italian; because our physiognomies and manners and philosophical system promise nothing but heart and courage,—and yet produce it not. Here, and in other passages regarding Prussia, where[29] she says,

'La capitale de la Prusse ressemble à la Prusse elle-même: les edifices et les institutions ont âge d'homme, et rien de plus, parcequ'un seul homme en est l'auteur,'—

one willingly forgives her the exaggeration of her complaints; not only because time has confuted them, and defended us and reëxalted us to our ancient princedoms, but also because her tears of anger over us are only warmer tears of love, with which she sees in the Germans falling angels at war with fallen.

The Preface gives a letter from Police-minister and General Savary to Madame, wherein, with much sense, he asserts that the work is not of a French spirit, and that she did well to leave out the name of the *Empereur*, seeing there was no worthy place for him. '*Il n'y pouvait trouver de place qui fût digne de lui*,' says the General; meaning, that among so many great poets and philosophers, of various ages and countries, the Elbese would not have cut the best figure, or looked *digne* (worshipful) enough. The gallant Police-minister deserves here to be discriminated from the vulgar class of lickspittles, who so nimbly pick up and praise whatever falls from princes, especially whatever good, without imitating it; but rather to be ranked among the second and higher class (so to speak), who lick up any rabid saliva of their superior, and thereby run off as mad and fiery as himself. Only thus, and not otherwise, could the General, from those detached portions which the censor had cut out, have divined, as from outpost victories, that the entire field was to be attacked and taken. Accordingly, the whole printed

[29] Tom. i. p. 108.

Edition was laid hold of, and, as it were, under a second paper-mill devil, hacked anew into beautiful pulp. Nor is that delicate feeling of the whilom censors and clippers to be contemned, whereby these men, by the faintest allusion, smell out the crown debts of their crown-robber (usurper), and thereby proclaim them. The Sphinx in Elba, who, unlike the ancient one, spared only him that could not rede his riddle,—(a riddle consisting in this, to make Europe like the *Turkish* grammar, wherein there is but one *conjugation*, one *declension*, no gender, and no exception),—could not but reckon a description of the Germans, making themselves a power within a power, to be ticklish matter. And does not the issue itself testify the sound sense of these upper and under censors? Forasmuch as they had to do with a most deep and polished enemy, whom they could nowise have had understanding enough to see through, were it not that, in such cases, suspicion sees farther than your half-understanding. She may often (might they say), under that patient nun-veil of hers, be as diplomatically mischievous as any nun-prioress.

But, not to forget the Work itself, in speaking of its fortunes, the Reviewer now proceeds to some particular observations on certain chapters; first, however, making a general one or two. No foreigner has yet, with so wide a glance and so wide a heart, apprehended and represented our German style of poetry, as this foreign *lady*. She sees French poetry,—which is a computable glittering crystal, compared with the immeasurable organisation of the German,—really in its true form, though with preference to that form, when she describes it as a *poésie de société*. In the *Vorschule der Aesthetik*,[30] it was, years ago, described even so, though with less affection; and in general terms, still earlier, by Herder. The Germans, again, our Authoress has meted and painted chiefly on the side of their comparability and dissimilarity to the French; and hereby our own self-subsistence and peculiar life has much less clearly disclosed itself to her. In a comparison of Nations, one may skip gaily along, among perfect truths, as along radii, and skip over the centre too, and miss it.

Concerning the chapters in the First Volume, one might say of our Authoress in her absence almost the same thing as before her face. For generalities, such as nations, countries, cities, are seized and judged of by her wide traveller-glance, better than specialities and poets, by her Gallic, narrow, female taste; as, indeed, in general, large masses, by the free scope they yield for allusions, are, in the hands of a gifted writer, the most productive. However, it is chiefly polite Germany, and most of all literary Germany, that has sat to her on this occasion; and of the middle class, nothing but the literary heights have come into view. Moreover, she attributes to climate what she should have looked for in history: thus[31] she finds the temperate regions more favourable to sociality than to poetry, '*ce sont les délices du midi ou les rigueurs du nord qui ébranlent fortement l'imagination*;' therefore, South Germany, that

[30] B. iii. k. 2. [31] Tom. i. c. 5.

is, Franconia, Swabia, Bavaria and Austria. Now, to say nothing of the circumstance that, in the first three of these countries, the alternation between the flower-splendour of spring and the cloudy cold of winter raises both the temperate warmth and the temperate coldness to the poetical degree, thereby giving them *two* chances, the opinion of our Authoress stands contradicted by mild Saxony, mild Brandenburg, England, Greece, on the one hand, and by warm Naples and cold Russia on the other. Nay, rather extreme frost and extreme heat may be said to oppress and exhaust the poet; and the Castalian fountain either evaporates or freezes. On the other hand, regions lying intermediate between these temperatures are those where mind and poetry are met with unshackled.

In chap. ii., *de l'esprit de conversation*, she describes very justly the art of talking (different from the art of speaking):[32]

'Le genre de bien-être que fait éprouver une conversation animée ne consiste précisément dans le sujet de conversation; les idées ni les connaissances qu'on peut y développer n'en sont pas le principal intérêt; c'est une certaine manière d'agir les uns sur les autres, de se faire plaisir réciproquement et avec rapidité, de parler aussitôt qu'on pense, de jouir à l'instant de soi-même, d'être applaudi (applaudie) sans travail, de manifester son esprit dans toutes les nuances par l'accent, le geste, le regard, enfin de produire a volonté comme une sorte d'électricité, que fait jaillir des étincelles.'

The passage[33] where she counsels the Germans to acquire social culture, and resignation in respect of social refinement, merits German attention. It is true, she should not, before denying us and prescribing us the French art of talking, have said:[34]

'L'esprit de conversation a quelquefois *l'inconvénient* d'altérer la sincérité du caractère; ce n'est pas une tromperie combinée, mais improvisée, si l'on peut s'exprimer ainsi:'

which, in plain language, signifies, in this art there is one unpleasant circumstance, that sometimes your honesty of heart suffers thereby; and you play the real literal knave, though only on the spur of the moment, and without special preparation. For the rest, it must be such passages as this, where she denies us these moral and æsthetic Gallicisms, allowing us, for compensation, nothing but learning, depth of heart and thought; such passages it must be by light of which the *Journal de Paris*, finding us denied not only the *tromperie combinée*, but now even the *improvisée*, has discovered that our Authoress is a secret enemy of the Germans; who will surely (hopes the Journal) get into anger with her, though, as always, not till late. For sharply as she attacks the French, she does it only on the moral side, which these forgive the more easily and feel the more faintly, the more she is in the right; but we again are assaulted in graver wise, and with other consequence, namely on the side of our understanding, which, as compared with the Gallic, in regard to business, to knowledge of the world, nay to combining and arranging works of art, she everywhere pronounces inferior.

[32] Tom. i. p. 68. [33] Page 81. [34] Page 70.

'Les Allemands mettent très-rarement en scène dans leurs comédies des ridicules tirés de leur propre pays; ils n'observent pas les autres; encore moins sont-ils capables de l'examiner eux-mêmes sous les rapports extérieurs, ils croiraient presque manquer à la loyauté qu'ils se doivent.'

To form the plan, to order the whole scenes towards one focus of impression (*effet*), this, says she, is the part of Frenchmen; but the German, out of sheer honesty, cannot do it. Nevertheless, our Lessing vowed that he could remodel every tragedy of Corneille into more cunning and more regular shape; and his criticisms, as well as his *Emilia Galotti*, to say nothing of Schiller and all the better German critics, are answer enough to Madame de Staël's reproach.

Three times, and in as many ways, she accounts for our deficiency in the art of witty speech. First, from our language: but had she forgotten her German when she wrote concerning it, '*La construction ne 'permet pas toujours de terminer une phrase par l'expression la plus 'piquante*'?[35] For does not directly, on the contrary, our language, alone among all the modern ones, reserve any word it pleases, any part of speech without exception—nay sometimes a half word,[36]—naturally and without constraint, for a dessert-wine of conclusion? Madame de Staël should also, to inform herself, have read at least a few dozen volumes of our epigram-anthologies with their thousand end-stings. What do Lessing's dialogues want, or our translations from the French, in regard to pliancy of language? But, on the whole, we always,—this is her second theory of our conversational mal-adroitness,—wish too much to say something or other, and not, like the French, nothing: a German wishes to express not only himself, but also something else; and under this something we frequently include sentiment, principle, truth, instruction. A sort of disgust comes over us to see a man stand speaking on, and quite coolly determined to show us nothing but himself: for even the narrator of a story is expected to propose rather our enjoyment in it than his own selfish praise for telling it.

In the third place, we are too destitute, complains our Authoress, of wit, consequently of *bon-mots*, and so forth. Reviewer complains, on the other hand, that the French are too destitute thereof. A Hippel, a Lichtenberg, like a Young or Pope, has more and better wit than a whole French decade will produce. French wit, reflection-wit (Reviewer here perfectly coincides with Jean Paul in his divisions of wit), surprises with one light resemblance, and with its prompt visibility, like a French garden, only once: British and German wit treats us with the comparison of resemblances reflecting one another, and with the continuous enjoyment of an English garden. For the reperusal of Lichtenberg, Reviewer commonly waits a year; for the reperusal of Voltaire ten years; for the reperusal of French Journalists sixty years; for that of

[35] Tom. i. p. 84.

[36] Paul has made this very sentence an example of his doctrine; one half of the word 'reserve' (*heben*) occurring at the commencement, the other half (*auf*) not till the end.—T.

Hamann as many minutes. The German of spirit is almost ashamed to be so light-witted as a Frenchman; and must make an effort not to make an effort. If he do not grudge the labour, he can heap-up, like Weisse in his *Satires*, more antitheses in a page than a Frenchman in a book. Men of the world, who in German are merely smooth and correct, glitter in French with witty turns; it is will, therefore, that chooses here, not inability. One may say, not this and that Frenchman, but the whole French people, has wit: but so common a wit can, even for that reason, be no deep one.

What farther was to be said against our want of French skill in talking, Reviewer leaves to the English, Spaniards, Italians, who all share it with us.

The following passage[37] may reconcile the French with our Authoress: '*En France la plupart des lecteurs ne veulent jamais être émus, ' ni même s'amuser aux dépens de leur conscience littéraire; le scrupule ' s'est réfugié là.*' In p. 13, she makes Hans Sachs compose *before* the Reformation; and in p. 14, Luther translate the Psalms *and* the Bible. This to a Frenchman, who would show literary, may be detrimental, if he repeats it. In p. 17, she finds a likeness between Wieland's prose and Voltaire's. Give her or give him Voltaire's wit, conciseness, lightness, pliancy, there can be nothing liker. Reviewer has a comfort in having Wieland called at once, by this class of admirers, the German Voltaire, and by that other, the German Greek: he needs not, in that case, reflect and confute, but simply leaves the speakers to their reciprocal annihilation. For the rest, the whole of this chapter, as well as the twelfth, lends and robs the good Wieland so lavishly, that we rather beg to omit it altogether. His Comic Tales are, in her view,[38] *imitées du Grec;* so that most of the French painters, their subjects being mythological, must also be imitators of the Greeks. In p. 62, she must either have misunderstood some Germans, or these must have misunderstood the Greeks, when she says of Fate, in contradistinction to Providence, '*Le sort* (the Greek Fate) *ne compte pour rien les sentimens des hommes.*' Sophocles *seven times* says no to this; and as often Æschylus. Nay, so inexorably does Fate pursue every immorality, especially audacious immorality, that (unlike Providence) it inflicts the punishment, even *under* repentance and reform. In p. 90, she calls Klopstock's Ode to his Future Love a *sujet maniéré:*

'Klopstock est moins heureux quand il écrit sur l'amour: il a, comme Dorat, adressé des vers a sa maîtresse future, et ce sujet maniéré n'a pas bien inspiré sa muse: il faut n'avoir pas souffert, pour se jouer avec le sentiment; et quand une personne sérieuse essaie un semblable jeu, toujours une contrainte secrète l'empêche de s'y montrer naturelle.'

How could her soul, that elsewhere responds to all pure-toned chords of love, mistake the yet unloved longing, wherewith the unloved and yet loving youth looks into his future heart, as with a coming homesickness? Does even the prosaic young man paint him an ideal, why

[37] Tom. ii. p. 2.

[38] Tom. ii. p. 67.

shall not the poetical incorporate and draw nearer to him the dear form that is glancing for him, though as yet unseen? It is true, this holds only of the first love; for a poem on a second, third and future love would doubtless merit the blame, which, indeed, she probably so meant.

The long passage from Voss's *Louise*[39] seems introduced to bring even the German reader, by the bald translation, into a state of yawning; and the happier French one into snoring and even snorting. Quite as unexpectedly has she extracted from *Maria Stuart*, instead of bright lyric altar-fire, the long farewell of Maria, too long even for German readers, and only for the epos not too short; and rendered it moreover in prose.

To Goethe she does justice where she admires him, but less where she estimates him. His poems she judges more justly than she does his plays. Everywhere, indeed, her taste borders more on the German when applied to short pieces than to long ones; above all, than to theatrical ones; for here the French curtain shrouds-up every foreign one. With her opinion of Goethe as a literary *man*, the Germans, since the appearance of his Autobiography, may readily enough dispense.

Of ch. 15, *de l'art dramatique*, Reviewer could undertake to say nothing, except something ill, did time permit.

Shakspeare, in whose child-like and poetic serene soul (as it were, a poetic Christ-child) she celebrates an *ironie presque Machiavellique* in delineating character, she ought to praise less on hearsay, since neither hearsay nor her own feeling can teach her how to praise Goethe's *Faust*. It is probable she knows only the French (un-souled and un-hearted) Shakspeare, and so values the man; but for Goethe's *Faust* too, she should have waited for a French version and perversion, to give him somewhat better commendation than that she sends him to France with.

If a translation is always but an inverted, pale, secondary rainbow of the original splendour, Madame de Staël's, as in general any French translation of *Faust*, is but a gray, cold, mock-sun to Goethe's real flaming Sun in Leo. At times, in place of a pallid translation, she gives a quite new speech; for example,[40] she makes the Devil say of Faust, '*Cet homme ne sera jamais qu'à demi pervers, et c'est en vain qu'il se flatte de parvenir à l'être entièrement.*' In the original appears no word of this, but merely the long, good, quite different passage, '*Verachte nur Vernunft und Wissenschaft,*' *&c.* That weighty omissions have prevented light translations in her work, is happy for the work of Goethe. This (like Dante's *Divine Comedy*) Diabolic Tragedy, in which whole spiritual universes act and fall, she has contracted and extracted into a love-tale. Of this sole and last zodiacal light which the set sun of Shakspeare has cast up over Germany, our lady Authoress wishes heartily[41] that another such, or more such, may not be written. Reviewer ventures to give her hope of fulfilment herein, and pledges himself for all Frenchmen. Consider only:[42]

[39] Page 82.
[40] Tom. iii. p. 137.
[41] Tom. iii. p. 160.
[42] Page 127.

'Il ne faut y chercher ni le goût, ni le mesure, ni l'art qui choisit et qui termine; mais si l'imagination pouvait se figurer un chaos intellectuel tel qu'on a souvent décrit le chaos matériel, le *Faust* de Goethe devrait avoir été composé a cette époque.'

Readeresses, why will every one of you insist on thinking herself a reader?

Her hard judgment on *Faust*, Madame had beforehand softened[43] by the praise she bestowed on *Götz von Berlichingen*: '*il y a des traits de génie ça et là*,' not only *here* but *there* also, '*dans son drame*.' Less warmly[44] does she praise the *Natural Daughter*; because the personages therein, like shades in Odin's Palace, lead only an imaged life; inasmuch as they bear no real Christian Directory-names, but are merely designated as King, Father, Daughter, &c. As for this last defect, Reviewer fancies he could remedy it, were he but to turn-up his French history and pick out at random the words Louis, Orleans, &c. and therewith christen the general titles, father, daughter; for, in the structure of the work, Madame de Staël will confess there are as firm, determinate, beheading-machines, arsenic-hats, poison-pills, steel-traps, *oubliettes*, spring-guns, introduced, as could be required of any court whither the scene of the piece might be transferred.

There is one censure from our Authoress, however, which Reviewer himself must countersign, though it touches the sweet orange-flower garland, Goethe's *Tasso*. Reviewer had been pleased to notice, in this piece, which cannot be acted in any larger space than within the chambers of the brain, no downcome, save the outcome, or end; where the moral knot, which can only be loosed in Tasso's heart, is, by cutting of the material knot, by banishment from court, left unloosed to accompany him in exile; and can at any hour raise up a second fifth-act. This want, indeed, is not felt *in* reading the work so much as *after* reading it. Our Authoress, however, points out[45] another want, which, in the piece itself, has a cooling, at least a shadowing influence: that, namely, in the first place, Princess Leonora is drawn not according to the warm climate, but rather as a German maiden; and so thinks and ponders about her love, instead of either sacrificing herself to it or it to herself; and that, secondly, the Poet Tasso acts not like an Italian accustomed to outward movement and business, but like a solitary German, and unskilfully entangles himself in the perplexities of life.

For the rest, her whole praise of Goethe will, in the sour head of a Frenchman, run to sheer censure; and her censure again will remain censure, and get a little sourer, moreover.

Perhaps the kindliest and justest of all her portraitures is that of Schiller. Not only is she, in her poetry, many times a sister of Schiller; but he also, in his intellectual pomp and reflex splendour, is now and then a distant though beatified relation of Corneille and Crebillon. Hence his half-fortune with the French: for, in consideration of a certain likeness to themselves, some unlikeness and greatness will be par-

[43] Page 402. [44] Page 125. [45] Page 122.

doned. If Gallic tragedy is often a centaur, begotten by an Ixion with a cloud, Schiller also, at times, has confounded a sun-horse and thunder-horse with the horse of the Muses, and mounted and driven the one instead of the other.

The *Donau-Nymphe* (Nymph of the Danube) obtains[46] the honour of an extract, and the praise,

'Le sujet de cette pièce semble plus ingénieux que populaire; mais les scènes merveilleuses y sont mêlées et variées avec tant d'art, qu'elle amuse également tous les spectateurs.'

Reviewer has heard Herder, more in earnest than in jest, call the *Zauberflöte* the only good opera the Germans had.

After sufficiently misunderstanding and faint-praising Goethe's *Meister* and *Ottilie*,[47] she ventures, though a lady, and a French one, to let fall this and the other remark about *humeur;* and, as it were, to utter a judgment (here Reviewer founds on the printed words) concerning Swift and Sterne. Sterne's humour, in *Tristram*, she imputes to phraseology;[48] nay, to phrases, not to ideas; and infers that Sterne is not translatable, and Swift is. Nevertheless, both of them have found very pretty lodgings in this country with Bode and Waser. Thereafter, in the same chapter on Romances, she makes Asmus, who has written no romance, the drawbridge for a sally against Jean Paul.

Her shallow sentence, as one more passed on him, may, among so many,—some friendlier, some more hostile,—pass on with the rest; till the right one appear, which shall exaggerate neither praise nor blame; for hitherto, as well the various pricking-girdles (cilices) in which he was to do penance, have been so wide for his body that they slipped to his feet, as in like wise the laurel-wreaths so large for his head that they fell upon his shoulders. Our Authoress dexterously unites both; and every period consists, in front, of a pleasant commendation, and behind of a fatal *mais;* and the left hand of the conclusion never knows what the right hand of the premises doeth. Reviewer can figure this jester comically enough, when he thinks how his face must, above fifteen times, have cheerfully thawed at the first clauses, and then suddenly frozen again at the latter. Those *mais* are his bitterest enemies. Our Authoress blames him for over-doing the pathetic; which blame she herself unduly shares with him in her *Corinne*, as Reviewer, in his long-past critique thereof, in these very *Jahrbücher*, hopes to have proved; and, it may be, had that review of *Corinne* met her eye, she would rather have left various things against J. P. unsaid. In p. 79, she writes, that he knows

[46] Tom. iv. p. 36.

[47] She finds *Ottilie* not moving enough;—the Reviewer again finds that *Ottilie* not only moves the heart, but crushes it. This more than female Werter excites deeper interest for her love than the male one; and, in an earlier time, would have intoxicated all hearts with tears. But what always obstructs a heroine with the female reading world, is the circumstance that she is not the hero.

[48] Tom. iv. p. 79.

the human heart only from little German towns, and (hence) '*Il y a 'souvent dans la peintrè de ces mœurs quelque chose de trop* INNOCENT '*pour notre siècle.*' Now it is a question whether J. P. could not, if not altogether disprove, yet uncommonly weaken, this charge of innocence,—by stating that many of his works were written in Leipzig, Weimar, Berlin, &c.; and that, consequently, his alleged innocence was not his blame, but that of those cities. He might also set forth how, in *Titan*, he has collected so much polished court-corruption, recklessness, and refined sin of all sorts, that it is a hardship for him,—saying nothing of those capital cities,—to be implicated in any such guilt as that of innocence.

However, to excuse her half and quarter judgment, let it not be concealed that scarcely have two of his works (*Hesperus* and *Siebenkäs*) been gone through by her; nay one of them, *Hesperus*, has not so much as been fairly gone into; for, after introducing a not very important scene from *Hesperus*, the couching of a father's eyes by a son, properly a thing which every century does to the other, she tables some shreds of a second incident in this same *Hesperus*, but with a statement that it is from a *different* romance. Of the *Rede des todten Christus* (Speech of the dead Christ) she has indeed omitted the superfluous commencement, but also more than half of the unsuperfluous conclusion, which closes those wounds. Reviewer willingly excuses her, since this author, a comet of moderate nucleus, carries so excessive a comet-train of volumes along with him, that even up to the minute when he writes this, such train has not yet got altogether above the horizon.

On the whole, she usually passes long judgments only on few-volumed writers,—for instance, Tieck, Werner; and short on many-volumed,—for instance, the rich Herder, whom she accommodates in a pretty bowerlet of four sides, or pages. The New Poetic School, at least August Schlegel, whom she saw act in Werner's *Twenty-fourth of February*, might have helped her out a little with instructions and opinions about Herder (nay, even about Jean Paul) as well as about Tieck; the more, as she seems so open to such communications that they often come back from her as mere echoes: for, strictly considered, it is the New, much more than the Old School, that really stands in opposition to the French.

The thirty-second chapter (*des Beaux Arts en Allemagne*) does not require seventeen pages, as *Faust* did, to receive sentence; but only seven, to describe German painting, statuary and music,—not so much compressedly as compressingly. Nevertheless, Reviewer willingly gives-up even these seven pages for the sake of the following beautiful remark:[49]

'La musique des Allemands est plus variée que celle des Italiens, et c'est en cela peut-être qu'elle est moins bonne: l'esprit est condamné a la variété,—c'est sa misère qui en est la cause; mais les arts, comme le sentiment, ont une admirable monotonie, celle dont on voudrait faire un moment éternel.'

The Fifth Volume treats of Philosophies—the French, the English,

[49] Tom. iv. p. 125.

the old and new and newest German, and what else from ancient Greece has to do with philosophies. Concerning this volume, a German reviewer can offer his German readers nothing new, except perhaps whimsicalities. While men,—for example, Jacobi,—after long studying and re-studying of great philosophers, so often fall into anxiety lest they may not have understood them, finding the computation look so easy, women of talent and breeding, simply from their gift of saying No, infer at once that they have seen through them. Reviewer is acquainted with intellectual ladies, who, in the hardest philosophical works,—for instance, Fichte's,—have found nothing but light and ease. Not what is thought, only what is learned, can women fancy as beyond their horizon. From Love they have acquired a boldness, foreign to us, of passing sentence on great men. Besides, they can always, instead of the conception, the idea, substitute a feeling. In p. 78, Madame de Staël says quite naïvely, she does not see why philosophers have striven so much to reduce all things to one principle, be it matter or spirit; one or a pair, it makes little difference, and explains the all no better. In p. 55, she imparts to the Parisians several categories of Kant's, with an *et-cætera;* as it were, an Alphabet, with an *and-so-forth*. If jesting is admissible in a review, the following passage on Schelling[50] may properly stand here:

'L'idéal et le réel tiennent, dans son langage, la place de l'intelligence et de la matière, de L'IMAGINATION et de l'expérience; et c'est dans la réunion de ces deux puissances en une harmonie complète, que consiste, selon lui, le principe unique et absolu de l'univers organisé. Cette harmonie, dont les deux POLES et le centre sont l'image, et qui est renfermé dans le nombre de trois, de tout temps si mystérieux, fournit a Schelling des APPLICATIONS *les plus ingénieuses.*'

But we return to earnest. Consider, now, what degree of spirit these three philosophic spirits can be expected to retain, when they have been passed off, and in, and carried through, three heads, as if by distillation ascending, distillation middle and distillation descending: for the three heads are, namely,—the head of the Authoress, who does not half understand the philosophers; the head of the Parisian, who again half understands our Authoress; and finally, the head of the Parisianess, who again half understands the Parisian. Through such a series of intermediate glasses the light in the last may readily refract itself into darkness.

Meanwhile, let the former praise remain to her unimpaired, that she still seizes in our philosophy the sunny side, which holds of the heart, to exhibit and illuminate the mossy north side of the French philosophy. Striking expressions of noblest sentiments and views are uncovered, like pearl-mussels, in this philosophic ebb and flow. Precious also, in itself, is the nineteenth chapter, on Marriage Love; though for this topic, foreign in philosophy, it were hard to find any right conductor into such a discussion, except, indeed, the philosophers Crates and Socrates furnish one.

[50] Tom. v. p. 83.

As the Sixth and last Volume treats of Religion and Enthusiasm,—a French juxtaposition,—it is almost her heart alone that speaks, and the language of this is always a pure and rich one. The separate pearls, from the philosophic ebb, here collects themselves into a pearl necklace. She speaks nobly on Nature, and Man, and Eternity;[51] so likewise on Enthusiasm.[52] Individual baldnesses it were easy for Reviewer to extract,—for they are short; but individual splendours difficult,—for they are too long.

To one who loves not only Germany but mankind, or rather both in each other, her praise and high preference of the German religious temper, in this volume, almost grows to pain: for, as we Germans ourselves complain of our coldness, she could have found a temperate climate here only by contrast with the French ice-field of irreligion from which she comes. Truly, she is in the right. The French, in these very days, have accepted their Sunday as crabbedly as the Germans parted with their Second Sundays, or Holidays, when forced to do it. Thus does the poisonous meadow-saffron of the Revolution, after its autumn-flowers have been left solitary and withered, still keep under ground its narcotic bulb for the awakened spring; almost as if the spirit of Freedom in this Revolution, like the spirit of Christianity, should construct and remodel every foreign people—only not the Jewish, where were the Nativity and Crucifixion.

The bitterness of the Parisian journal-corps, who have charged against this Work of the Baroness more fiercely than against all her Romances, shows us that it is something else than difference of taste that they strike and fire at: their hearts have been doubly provoked by this comparison, and trebly by this discordance in their own most inward feeling, which loves not to expose itself as an outward one. In romances, they took all manner of religion as it came; they could charge it on the characters, and absolve the poetess: but here she herself,—not with foreign lips, but with her own,—has spoken out for religion, and against the country where religion is yet no *rémigrée*.

A special Pamphlet, published in Paris, on this Work, enlists the method of question and answer in the service of delusion, to exhibit bold beauties, by distorting them from their accompaniments, in the character of bombast. It is but seldom that our Authoress sins, and, in German fashion, against German taste, as where she says,[53]

'Tous les moutons du même troupeau viennent donner, les uns après les autres, leurs coups-de-tête aux idées, qui n'en restent moins ce qu'elles sont.'

In presence of a descriptive power that delights foreign nations, one might hope the existing French would modestly sink mute—they whose eulogistic manner, in the *Moniteur*, in the senate and everywhere, towards the throne, has at all times been as strained, windy and faded as its object, and in whom, as in men dying the wrong way (while, in common cases, in the cooling of the outward limbs, the heart continues to

[51] Tom. vi. pp. 78-86. [52] Chap. x. [53] Tom. vi. p. 11.

give heat), nothing remains warm but the members from which the frozen heart lies farthest.

It is difficult, amid so many bright passages, which, like polished gold, not only glitter, but image and exhibit, to select the best. For example, the description of the Alps by night, and of the whole festival of Interlaken;[54]—the remark[55] that both the excess of heat in the east, and of cold in the north, incline the mind to idealism and visuality;—or this, '*Ce qui manque en France, en tout genre, c'est le sentiment et l'habitude du respect.*'[56]

Still more than we admire the Work, is the Authoress, considering also her sex and her nation, to be admired. Probably she is the only woman in Europe, and still more probably the only French person in France, that could have written such a book on Germany. Had Germany been her cradle and school, she might have written a still better work, namely, on France. And so we shall wish this spiritual Amazon strength and heart for new compaigns and victories; and then, should she again prove the revieweress of a reviewer, let no one undertake that matrimonial relation but FRIP.[57]

No. 2.

SCHILLER, GOETHE AND MADAME DE STAEL.[1]

[1832.]

IN this age, by some called the Locomotive, when men travel with all manner of practical, scientific and unscientific purposes; to fish Mexican oysters, and convert the heathen; in search of the picturesque, in search of cheap land, good groceries, bibliography, wives, new cookery, and generally, though without effect, in search of happiness; when even kings, queens and constitutions, are so often sent on their travels; and what with railways, what with revolutions, absolutely nothing will stay in its place,—the interest that once attached to mere travellers is gone: no Othello could now by such means win the simplest Desdemona. Nevertheless, in Madame de Staël's Travels there is still something peculiar. Shut out from her bright beloved Paris, she gyrates round it in a wider or narrower circle. Haunted with danger, affliction, love of knowledge, and above all with *ennui*, she sets forth in her private carriage on two intermingled errands: first, 'to find noble characters;' secondly, 'to

[54] Tom. i. ch. xx. [55] Tom. v. p. 87.

[56] Tom. v. p. 27. So likewise, tom. v. pp. 11, 97, 109, 125, 207.

[57] *Frip* is the anagram of J.P.F.R., and his common signature in such cases.—T.

[1] FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 26.

study national physiognomies.' The most distinguished female living will see face to face the most distinguished personages living, be they male or female; will have sweet counsel with them, or, in philosophic tourney, 'free passages of arms;' will gauge them with her physiognomical callipers, and, if so seem fit, print their dimensions in books. Not to study the charters, police and economy of nations; to stand in their council-halls, workshops, dress-shops and social assemblages; least of all, to gaze on waterfalls, and ruined robber-towers, and low over them, as the cattle on a thousand hills can do, is she posting through the world: but to read the living book of man, as written in various tongues; nay, to read the chrestomathy and diamond-edition of that living polyglot book of man, wherein, for clear eyes, all his subordinate performances, practices and arrangements, or the best spirit of these, stand legible. It is a tour, therefore, not for this or that object of culture, this or that branch of wisdom; but for culture generally, for wisdom itself: and combines with this distinction that of being a true tour of knight-errantry, and search of spiritual adventures and feats of intellect,—the only knight-errantry practicable in these times. With such high-soaring views, Madame first penetrated into Germany in 1803; and could not miss Weimar, where the flower of intellectual Germany was then assembled.

The figure of such a three as Goethe, Schiller and De Staël, to whom Wieland, Müller and other giants might be joined, rises beautiful in our imagination, and throws powder in the eyes; and perhaps, for merely poetic purposes, it were best if we left it invested with that rose-coloured cloud, and pried no deeper. But insatiable curiosity will nowise let the matter rest there; Science, as well as Fancy, must have its satisfaction. The 'spiritual Amazon' was a mortal woman; those philosophic joustings and symposia were also transacted on our common clay earth: behind that gorgeous arras, of which we see not the knotty side, who knows what vulgar, angular stone and mortar lies concealed! In the Sixth Volume of the *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe*, lately published; still more, in the Thirty-first Volume of Goethe's *Works*, even now publishing, where, under the title of *Tag- und Jahres-Heft*, is a continuation of his Autobiography, we find some indications and disclosures. These the British world, for insight into this matter, shall now also behold, in juxtaposition, if not in combination. Of Madame in London there are some sketches in Byron's Letters, but more in the way of daubing than of painting; done too, not with philosophic permanent-colours, but with mere dandyic ochre and japan, which last were but indifferently applicable here. The following are in a more artistic style, and may be relied on as sincere and a real likeness.

We give the whole series of Notices, which we have translated, long and short, arranged according to the order of dates, beginning with the first note of distant preparation, and ending with the latest reminiscence. Goethe is, for the time, at Jena, engaged in laborious official duties of a literary kind, when, on the 30th of November 1803, Schiller thus finishes a letter to him from Weimar:

'Madame de Staël is actually in Frankfort, and we may soon look 'for her here. If she but understand German, I doubt not we shall do 'our part; but to preach our religion to her in French phrases, and 'standing the brunt of French volubility, were too hard a problem. We 'should not get through so cleverly as Schelling did with Camille Jor-'dan. Farewell.'

The next will explain themselves:

'Jena, 13th December 1803.

'It was to be foreseen, that when Madame de Staël came to Weimar, 'I should be called thither. I have taken counsel with myself, that the 'moment might not surprise me, and determined on staying here. For 'the laborious and dubious business that now lies on me, whatever phy-'sical force I have, especially in this bad month, will scantily suffice; 'from the intellectual surveyance down to the mechanical typographical 'department, I need to have it all before me. * * * * You, my 'dear friend, see, not without horror, what a case I am in; with Meyer, 'indeed, to comfort me, yet without help or complete fellow-feeling from 'any one: for whatever is so much as possible, our people look upon 'as easy. Wherefore, I entreat you, take my place; guide the whole 'matter for the best, so far as possible. If Madame de Staël please to 'visit me, she shall be well received. Let me but know four-and-twenty 'hours beforehand, and part of the Loder apartments shall be furnished 'to lodge her; she will find a burgher's table, and welcome; we shall 'actually meet and speak together; she can stay while such remains her 'pleasure. What I have to do here is transacted in separate half-hours; 'the rest of my time shall be hers: but in this weather to go and to 'come, to dress, appear at court and in company, is, once for all, im-'possible, as decisively as ever you, in the like condition, have pro-'nounced it.

'All this I commit to your friendly guidance, for there is nothing 'that would gratify me more than to see this distinguished lady, and 'personally make acquaintance with her; really glad were I, could she 'spend these two leagues of road on me. Worse quarters than await 'her here she has been used to by the way. Do you lead and manage 'these conditions with your delicate and kind hand, and send me an ex-'press when anything decided occurs.

'Good speed to all that your solitude produces, as yourself could 'wish and will! For me, I am rowing in a foreign element; nay, I 'might say, only splashing and spluttering therein, with loss for the out-'ward man, and without the smallest satisfaction for the inward or from 'the inward. But after all, if it be true, as Homer and Polygnotos teach 'me more and more, that we poor mortals have properly a kind of hell 'to enact in this earth of ours, such a life may pass among the rest. A 'thousand farewells in the celestial sense! GOETHE.'

'Weimar, 14th December 1803.

'Against your reasons for not coming hither there is nothing solid 'to be urged; I have stated them with all impressiveness to the Duke. 'For Madame de Staël herself too, it must be much pleasanter to see 'you without that train of dissipation; and for yourself, under such an 'arrangement, this acquaintance may prove a real satisfaction, which 'were otherwise a burden not to be borne.

* * * * * *

'Fare you heartily well; keep sound and cheerful, and deal gently 'with the Pilgrimess that wends towards you. When I hear more, you 'shall learn. SCHILLER.

'P.S. The Duke gives me answer that he will write to you himself, 'and speak with me in the Theatre.'

'Weimar, 21st December 1803.

'The rapid and truly toilsome alternation of productive solitude[2] with 'formal society, and its altogether heterogeneous dissipations, so fatigued 'me last week, that I absolutely could not take the pen, and left it to 'my wife to give you some picture of us.

'Madame de Staël you will find quite as you have *à priori* construed 'her: she is all of one piece; there is no adventitious, false, patholo- 'gical speck in her. Hereby is it that, notwithstanding the immeasur- 'able difference in temper and way of thought, one is perfectly at ease 'with her, can hear all from her, and say all to her. She represents 'French culture in its purity, and under a most interesting aspect. In 'all that we name philosophy, therefore in all highest and ultimate ques- 'tions, one is at issue with her, and remains so in spite of all arguing. 'But her nature, her feeling, is better than her metaphysics; and her 'fine understanding rises to the rank of genial. She insists on explain- 'ing everything, on seeing into it, measuring it; she allows nothing dark, 'inaccessible; whithersoever her torch cannot throw its light, there no- 'thing exists for her. Hence follows an aversion, a horror, for the trans- 'cendental philosophy, which in her view leads to mysticism and super- 'stition. This is the carbonic gas in which she dies. For what we call 'poetry there is no sense in her: from such works it is only the passion- 'ate, the oratorical, the intellectual, that she can appropriate; yet she 'will endure no falsehood there, only does not always recognise the true.

'You infer from these few words that the clearness, decidedness and 'rich vivacity of her nature cannot but affect one favourably. Our only 'grievance is the altogether unprecedented glibness of her tongue: you 'must make yourself all ear, if you would follow her. Nevertheless, as 'even I, with my small faculty of speaking French, get along quite toler- 'ably with her, you, with your greater practice, will find communication 'very easy.

[2] Schiller was now busied with *Wilhelm Tell;* on which last and greatest of his Dramas this portion of the *Correspondence with Goethe* mainly turns.

'My proposal were, that you came over on Saturday; opened the 'acquaintance, and then returned on Sunday to your Jena business. If 'she stay longer than the new year, you will find her here; if she leave 'us sooner, she can still visit you in Jena before going.

'The great point at present is, that you hasten to get a sight of her, 'and so free yourself of the stretch of expectation. If you can come 'sooner than Saturday, so much the better.

'For the present, farewell. My labour has not, indeed, advanced 'much this week, but also not stood still. It is truly a pity that this 'so interesting Phenomenon should have come upon us at the wrong sea- 'son, when pressing engagements, bad weather, and the sad public oc- 'currences over which one cannot rise quite triumphant, conspire to 'oppress us. SCHILLER.'

Goethe, having finished his work, returns to Weimar, but not in health. We find no mention of Madame till the 4th of January, and then only this:

* * * * 'Of the Lady de Staël I hear nothing: I hope she is 'busy with Benjamin Constant. What would I give for quietness, liberty 'and health, through the next four weeks! I should then have almost 'done. SCHILLER.'

(Apparently of the same date.)

'Here come the new Periodicals, with the request that you would 'forward them, after use, to Meyer: especially I recommend No. 13 'to notice. So there is nothing new under the sun? And did not 'our accomplished Pilgrimess assure me this morning, with the utmost '*naïveté*, that whatever words of mine she could lay hold of, she meant 'to print? That story about *Rousseau's Letters*[3] does her no good with 'me at present. One sees oneself and the foolish French petticoat-am- 'bition as in a diamond-adamant mirror. The best wishes for you.

'GOETHE.'

(No date.)

* * * 'Madame de Staël, in a note to my wife this morning, 'speaks of a speedy departure, but also of a very probable return by 'Weimar. * * * SCHILLER.'

(No date.)

* * * 'Madame de Staël means to stay three weeks yet. Spite 'of all her French hurry, she will find, I fear, by her own experience, 'that we Germans in Weimar are also a changeful people,—that every 'guest should know when to be gone. * * * SCHILLER.'

(No date.)

* * * 'De Staël I saw yesterday here, and shall see her again 'today with the Duchess's mother. It is the old story with her: one

[3] This will explain itself afterwards; *infrà*, p. 296.

'would think of the Danaïdes' sieve, if Oknos[4] with his ass did not 'rather occur to one. SCHILLER.'

'13th January 1804.

* * * 'Be well and happy, and continue by your noble industry 'to give us a fresh interest in life: stand to it tightly in the Hades of 'company, and plait your reeds there into a right stiff rope, that there 'may be something to chew.——Greeting and hail! GOETHE.'

'14th January.

* * * 'Your *Exposition* has refreshed me and nourished me. 'It is highly proper that by such an act, at this time, you express your 'contradiction of our importunate Visitress; the case would grow in-'tolerable otherwise.

'Being sick at present, and gloomy, it seems to me impossible that 'I could ever hold such discourses again. It is positively a sin against 'the Holy Ghost to speak even one word according to her dialect. Had 'she taken lesson of Jean Paul, she would not have stayed so long in 'Weimar: let her try it for other three weeks at her peril. * * * 'SCHILLER.'

'24th January.

'Today, for the first time, I have had a visit from Madame de Staël. 'It is still the same feeling: with all daintiness she bears herself rudely 'enough,—as a traveller to Hyperboreans, whose noble old pines and 'oaks, whose iron and amber, civilised people indeed could turn to use 'and ornament.

'Meanwhile she forces you to bring out the old worn carpets, by 'way of guest-present, and the old rusty weapons to defend yourself 'withal. GOETHE.'

'26th January.

* * * 'What are you busy with for today and tomorrow? That 'long-projected French reading of Madame de Staël's takes place, I 'hear, tomorrow evening. However, if you are at home then, and in 'the mood, I hereby invite myself, for I long much to see you. 'SCHILLER.'

'Madame de Staël was here today with Müller, and the Duke 'soon joined us; whereby the discourse grew very lively; and our first 'object, that of revising her Translation of *The Fisher*,[5] was rendered 'vain. * * *

[4] Oknos, a Greek gentleman, of date unknown, diligently plaits a reed rope, which his ass as diligently eats. This Oknos is supposed to have had *an unthrifty wife*. Hence Schiller's allusion.

[5] 'Das Wasser rauscht, das Wasser schwoll,
Ein Fischer sass daran;' &c.;
a celebrated little poem of Goethe's.

'Tomorrow evening, about five, Benjamin Constant is to be with 'me. If you can look in later, it will be kindly done. Wishing you 'sound sleep. GOETHE.'

'8th February.

* * * 'If you can visit me tonight, pray mention to the bearer 'at what hour you would like the carriage. GOETHE.'

* * * 'Being in quite special tune for working today, I must 'make a long evening of it, and doubt whether I shall get out to you. 'Unhappily I have to struggle and make-up beforehand for the loss of 'tomorrow, being engaged to dine with Madame de Staël then.

'SCHILLER.'

(On, or after, the 21st of Feb.)

* * * 'Tonight we shall meet at Madame's. Yesterday we 'missed *you* sadly. Many a merry matter turned up, which we will 'laugh at by ourselves some day. SCHILLER.'

(On, or after, the 12th of March.)

'It is a right comfort to me that you offer to take charge of *Tell*. 'If I be in any tolerable state, I will certainly come. Since I saw you 'last time at the rehearsal, I have not been at all well: the weather is 'not kind to me; besides, ever since the departure of Madame, I have 'felt no otherwise than as if I had risen from a severe sickness.

'SCHILLER.'

With clipping and piecing we have now done; but, by way of hem to this patchwork, subjoin the passage from Goethe's Autobiography[6] above referred to, which offers us a summary and brief synopsis of the whole circumstances,—written long afterwards, in that tone of cheerful gravity, combining the clearest insight with tolerance and kindly humour, to which no reader of his *Dichtung und Wahrheit* can be a stranger.

'Madame de Staël came to Weimar in the beginning of December, 'while I was still at Jena busied with the Programme. What Schiller 'wrote me on the 21st of that month served at once to instruct me 'touching the relation which her presence would give rise to.[7]

'As I could not move from Jena till my task were finished, there 'came tidings and delineations to me of many kinds how the lady bore 'herself and was received; and I could moderately well prescribe for 'myself the part I had to play: yet it all turned out quite otherwise, as 'in the next year, which we are now approaching, must be shown.

* * * * * *

6 *Werke*, b. xxxi. ss. 170-6.

7 Here follows Schiller's Letter, which we have given already, *suprà*, p. 292.

1804.

'Winter had come on with full violence, the roads were snowed-up; 'without strong effort was no travelling. Madame de Staël announced 'herself more and more importunately. My business was concluded, 'and I resolved for many reasons to return to Weimar; but this time, 'also, I felt the unwholesomeness of winter residence in the Castle. The 'so dear-bought experience of 1801 had not made me wiser: I returned 'with a bad cold, which, without being dangerous, kept me some days 'in bed, and then weeks long in my room; on which account, a part 'of this distinguished lady's stay was for me historical only, as I learned 'what happened in society from the narratives of friends; and afterwards 'too our personal intercourse had to be managed first by billets, then 'by dialogues, and, later still, in the smallest circle,—perhaps the most 'favourable way both for learning what was in her, and imparting, so 'far as that might be, what was in me.

'With decisive vehemence she followed her purpose, to become ac- 'quainted with our circumstances, coördinating and subordinating them 'to her ideas; to inform herself as much as possible concerning indivi- 'duals; as a woman of the world, to gain clear views of our social re- 'lations: with her deep female spirit to penetrate and see through our 'general modes of representing Man and Nature, which is called our 'philosophy. Now, though I had no cause to simulate with her, as in- 'deed, even when I let myself have free course, people do not always 'rightly interpret me; yet here there was an extraneous circumstance at 'work, that for the moment made me shy. I received, just at that time, 'a newly-published French book, containing the correspondence of two 'ladies with Rousseau.[8] On the secluded, inaccessible man, these fair 'intruders had played-off a downright mystification,—contriving to in- 'terest him in certain small concerns, and draw him into letter-writing; 'which letters, when they have had enough of the joke, they lay to- 'gether, and send forth through the press.

'To Madame de Staël I expressed my dislike of the proceedings; 'she, however, took the matter lightly; nay seemed to applaud it, and 'not obscurely signified that she meant to deal with us much in the same 'way. There needed no more to put me on my guard, in some measure 'to seal me up.

'The great qualities of this high-thinking and high-feeling authoress 'lie in the view of every one; and the results of her journey through 'Germany testify sufficiently how well she applied her time there.

'Her objects were manifold: she wished to know Weimar, to gain 'accurate acquaintance with its moral, social, literary aspects, and what 'else it offered; farther, however, she herself also wished to be known; 'and endeavoured therefore to give her own views currency, no less than 'to search-out our way of thought. Neither could she rest satisfied even 'here: she must also work upon the senses, upon the feelings, the spirit;

[8] *Suprà*, p. 293: date, 4th January.

'must strive to awaken a certain activity or vivacity, with the want of 'which she reproached us.

'Having no notion of what Duty means, and to what a silent, col- 'lected posture he that undertakes it must restrict himself, she was ever- 'more for striking in, for instantaneously producing an effect. In society 'there must be constant talking and discoursing.

'The Weimar people are doubtless capable of some enthusiasm, per- 'haps occasionally of a false enthusiasm; but no French upblazing was 'to be looked for from them; least of all at a time when the French 'political preponderance threatened all Europe, and calm-thinking men 'foresaw the inevitable mischief which, next year, was to lead us to the 'verge of destruction.

'In the way of public reading also, and reciting, did this lady strive 'for laurels. I excused myself from an evening party when she exhibited '*Phèdre* in this fashion,[9] and where the moderate German plaudits no- 'wise contented her.

'To philosophise in society, means to talk with vivacity about in- 'soluble problems. This was her peculiar pleasure and passion. Na- 'turally too she was wont to carry it, in such speaking and counter- 'speaking, up to those concerns of thought and sentiment which properly 'should not be spoken of except between God and the individual. Here, 'moreover, as woman and Frenchwoman, she had the habit of sticking 'fast on main positions, and, as it were, not hearing rightly what the 'other said.

'By all these things, the evil genius was awakened in me, so that 'I would treat whatever was advanced no otherwise than dialectically 'and problematically, and often, by stiff-necked contradictions, brought 'her to despair; wherein, truly, she for the first time grew rightly ami- 'able, and in the most brilliant manner exhibited her talent of thinking 'and replying.

'More than once I had regular dialogues with her, ourselves two; 'in which likewise, however, she was burdensome, according to her 'fashion; never granting, on the most important topics, a moment of 'reflection, but passionately demanding that you should despatch the 'deepest concerns, the weightiest occurrences, as lightly as if it were a 'game at shuttlecock.

'One little instance, instead of many, may find place here:

'She stepped in, one evening before court-time, and said, as if for 'salutation, with warm vehemence, "I have important news to tell you: 'Moreau is arrested, with some others, and accused of treason against 'the Tyrant." I had long, as every one had, taken interest in the per- 'son of this noble individual, and followed his actions and attempts. 'I now silently called back the past; in order, as my way is, to try the 'present thereby, and deduce, or at least forecast, the future. The lady 'changed the conversation, leading it, as usual, on manifold indifferent

[9] *Suprà*, p. 294: date, 26th January.

'things; and as I, persisting in my reverie, did not forthwith answer 'her with due liveliness, she again reproached me, as she had often done, 'that this evening too, according to custom, I was in the dumps (*maus-'sade*), and no cheerful talk to be had with me. I felt seriously angry; 'declared that she was capable of no true sympathy, that she dashed-in 'without note of warning, felled you with a club,—and next minute you 'must begin piping tunes for her, and jig from subject to subject.

'Such speeches were quite according to her heart; she wished to 'excite passion, no matter what. In order to appease me, she now 'went over all the circumstances of the above sorrowful mischance, and 'evinced therein great penetration into characters, and acquaintance with 'the posture of affairs.

'Another little story will prove likewise how gaily and lightly you 'might live with her, if you took it in her own way:

'At a numerous supper-party with the Duchess Amelia, I was sit-'ting far off her, and chanced this time also to be taciturn and rather 'meditative. My neighbours reproved me for it, and there rose a little 'movement, the cause of which at length reached up to the higher per-'sonages. Madame de Staël heard the accusation of my silence; ex-'pressed herself regarding it in the usual terms, and added, "On the 'whole, I never like Goethe till he has had a bottle of champagne." I 'said half-aloud, so that those next me could hear, "I suppose, then, 'we have often got a little *elevated* together." A moderate laugh en-'sued. She wanted to know the cause. No one could, or would, give 'a French version of my words in their proper sense; till at last Ben-'jamin Constant, one of those near me, undertook, as she continued 'asking and importuning, to satisfy her by some euphonistic phrase, and 'so terminate the business.

'But whatever, on reflection, one may think or say of these proceed-'ings, it is ever to be acknowledged that, in their results, they have 'been of great importance and influence. That Work *On Germany*, 'which owed its origin to such social conversations, must be looked on 'as a mighty implement, whereby, in the Chinese Wall of antiquated 'prejudices which divided us from France, a broad gap was broken; so 'that across the Rhine, and in consequence of this, across the Channel, 'our neighbours at last took closer knowledge of us; and now the whole 'remote West is open to our influences. Let us bless those annoyances, 'therefore, and that conflict of national peculiarities, which at the time 'seemed unseasonable, and nowise promised us furtherance.'

SUMMARY.

BURNS.

Our grand maxim of supply and demand. Living misery and posthumous glory. The character of Burns a theme that cannot easily become exhausted. His Biographers. Perfection in Biography. (p. 1.)—Burns one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century: An age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen. His hard and most disadvantageous conditions. Not merely as a Poet, but as a Man, that he chiefly interests and affects us. His life a deeper tragedy than any brawling Napoleon's. His heart, erring and at length broken, full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things. The Peasant Poet bears himself among the low, with whom his lot is cast, like a King in exile. (4.)—His Writings but a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him, yet of a quality enduring as the English tongue. He wrote, not from hearsay, but from sight and actual experience. This, easy as it looks, the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with. Byron, heartily as he detested insincerity, far enough from faultless. No poet of Burns's susceptibility from first to last so totally free from affectation. Some of his Letters, however, by no means deserve this praise. His singular power of making all subjects, even the most homely, interesting. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place. Every genius an impossibility till he appears. (8.)—Burns's rugged earnest truth, yet tenderness and sweet native grace. His clear graphic 'descriptive touches' and piercing emphasis of thought. Professor Stewart's testimony to Burns's intellectual vigour. A deeper insight than any 'doctrine of association.' In the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling. Loving Indignation and *good* Hatred: *Scots wha hae: Macpherson's Farewell:* Sunny buoyant floods of Humour. (15.)—Imperfections of Burns's poetry: *Tam o' Shanter*, not a true poem so much as a piece of sparkling rhetoric: The *Jolly Beggars*, the most complete and perfect as a poetical composition. His Songs the most truly inspired and most deeply felt of all his poems. His influence on the hearts and literature of his country: Literary patriotism. (23.)—Burns's acted Works even more interesting than his written ones; and these too, alas, but a fragment: His passionate youth never passed into clear and steadfast manhood. The only true happiness of a man: Often it is the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it: Burns and Byron. Burns's hard-worked, yet happy boyhood: His estimable parents. Early dissipations. In Necessity and Obedience a man should find his highest Freedom. (29.)—Religious quarrels and scepticisms. Faithlessness: Exile and blackest desperation. Invited to Edinburgh: A Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of Literature. Sir Walter Scott's reminiscence of an interview with Burns. Burns's calm manly bearing amongst the Edinburgh aristocracy. His bitter feeling of his own indigence. By the great he is treated in the customary fashion; and each party goes his several way. (33.)—What Burns was next to do, or to avoid: His Excise-and-Farm scheme not an unreasonable one: No failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. Good beginnings. Patrons of genius and picturesque tourists: Their moral rottenness, by which he became infected, gradually eat out the heart of his life. Meteors of French Politics rise before him, but they are not *his* stars. Calumny is busy with him. The little great-folk of Dumfries: Burns's desolation. In his destitution and degradation one act of self-devotedness still open to him: Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country. The crisis of his life: Death. (38.)—Little effectual help could perhaps have been rendered to Burns: Patronage twice cursed: Many a poet has been poorer, none prouder. And yet much might have been done to have

made his humble atmosphere more genial. Little Babylons and Babylonians: Let us go and *do otherwise*. The market-price of Wisdom. Not in the power of *any* mere external circumstances to ruin the mind of a man. The errors of Burns to be mourned over, rather than blamed. The great want of his life was the great want of his age, a true faith in Religion and a singleness and unselfishness of aim. (43.)—Poetry, as Burns could and ought to have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion. For his culture as a Poet, poverty and much suffering for a season were absolutely advantageous. To divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets an ill-starred attempt. Byron, rich in worldly means and honours, no whit happier than Burns in his poverty and worldly degradation: They had a message from on High to deliver, which could leave them no rest while it remained unaccomplished. Death and the rest of the grave: A stern moral, *twice* told us in our own time. The world habitually unjust in its judgments of such men. With men of right feeling anywhere, there will be no need to plead for Burns: In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts. (48.)

THE LIFE OF HEYNE.

Professor Heeren's biographical and general literary abilities. Stinted rub-a-dub style of thinking and writing: Rhetorical flourishes: Truthfulness and trustworthiness. (p. 54.)—Some account of Heyne's early years, given in his own words. Honesty, industry and almost destitution of his parents. Petty tyranny and rapacity: A juvenile would-be Brutus. Early schooling: hardships and helps: A quick scholar. His account of his boyhood rather barren and intolerant. Extraordinary school proficiency. A small degree of self-confidence awakened in him: General discontent: Becomes a private tutor. (56.)—At Leipzig University: ill-clothed, destitute of Books, with five shillings in his purse: He picked up what scraps of learning he could lay hold of: Ernesti the only teacher from whom he derived any benefit. Heyne's best teacher, himself: Without any clear aim, he set his heart on attaining knowledge, and no promise or threat could turn him back. Occasionally gets employment in giving private lessons: Chooses the profession of law. Some Latin verses attract the notice of Count Brühl. Ministerial smiles and empty promises. Again helps himself by private teaching: A hard bed: Boiled pease-cods not unfrequently his only meal: A poor appointment. (62.)—His edition of Tibullus. His day of difficulty far from past. Some consequences of the Seven-Years War: Literary struggles. Accepts a tutorship in the family of Herr von Schönberg. Theresa Weiss: Her earnest intelligence, and good-heartedness: Friendship ripening into passion: Mutual confidence. Bombardment of Dresden: Flight, and helpless destitution. Theresa's extreme illness: She renounces the Catholic, and publicly embraces the Protestant Faith: Marriage: a bold step, but a right one. Domestic difficulties and hardships: Theresa's prompt courage. (67.)—Dawning of better days: Appointed Professor of Eloquence at Göttingen. His long life henceforth quietly and actively fruitful. His literary and other labours. Death of his noble-hearted Wife: Grounds of consolation. His friends provide him with a new Bride: She proved an excellent wife to him. State of education in Germany. Heyne's successful labours for the Göttingen University. He lived till he had completed all his undertakings; and died softly and gently in his eighty-third year. (73.)—His intellectual character. Founded a new epoch in classical study. A show of dulness and hardness in him, not intrinsically belonging to him: A kindly old man, whom the Germans have some reason to be proud of. Another proof that man is not the product of his circumstances, but that, in a far higher degree, the circumstances are the product of the man. (81.)

GERMAN PLAYWRIGHTS.

Comparative estimation of the playwright, millwright and cartwright. England not so successful in the first species of carpentry as in the other two. The Playwrights of Germany a strong triumphant body: Interest in the Drama taking the place of interest in Politics. The world of pasteboard, and the world of fact. The study of German Literature, like all other earthly undertakings, has its negative as well as its positive side. The German Parnassus. Ill-fated Kotzebue, lifted up by the hollow balloon of popular applause. Melancholy end of all wind-bags. (p. 85.)—Grillparzer, Klingemann and Müllner may stand as representatives of the Playwrights of Germany. Grillparzer, not without reluctance, named under the head of Playwrights: Might have done good service in some prose or small-poem department. Tricks of the trade: The public a dim-eyed animal, gullible to almost all lengths. Of Grillparzer's peculiar knacks, not very much to be said: His worst Play, the *Ahn-*

frau; a deep tragedy of the Castle-Spectre sort. *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*, a much more innocent piece, full of action, though without any discernible coherence. Agglomeration is not creation, and avails little in Literature. King Ottokar's soliloquy in the last of his fields. A charitable hope for better things. (90.)—Dr. Klingemann one of the most indisputable Playwrights now extant. His materials chiefly rosin, oil-paper, vizards, scarlet drapery and gunpowder. The compound nowise unpleasant: If any man wish to amuse himself irrationally, here is ware for his money. *Ahasuer*, the Wandering Jew. *Faust*, and his melodramatic contract with the Devil: A few scenes, showing how Faust was carried off in thunder, lightning and blue fire. Dr. Klingemann, a bold perpendicular Playwright, entirely contented with himself and his handicraft. (97.)—Dr. Müllner supreme over all Playwrights: Might have made a very pretty Lawyer, but to set up for a Poet a different enterprise. Ever tempting us with some hope that here is a touch of Poetry; and ever disappointing us with an expanse of pure Prose. (105.)—Müllner's one receipt for play-making borrowed from Zacharias Werner: A pettifogging sheriff's-officer principle of Fate, the raw material of his whole tragedy-goods. The Greek idea of Fate, a lofty and consistent hypothesis. Dr. Müllner's Fate-tenet totally incredible even to himself: A mere craftsman's trick. His abilities and performances as a journalist: German editorial squabbles. The duty of Foreign Reviewers twofold: What to be welcomed; and what to be rejected: Let every one be active for himself. (109.)

VOLTAIRE.

Resistless and boundless power of true Literature. Every Life a well-spring, whose stream flows onward to Eternity. Present aspect of a man often strangely contrasted with his future influence: Moses; Mahomet; the early Christians; Tamerlane and Faust of Mentz. How noiseless is Thought! (p. 120.)—Voltaire's European reputation. The biography of such a man cannot be unimportant. Differences of opinion: Necessity for mutual tolerance. Voltaire's character: Adroitness, and multifarious success: Keen sense of rectitude; and fellow-feeling for human suffering. (124.)—Not a 'great character;' essentially a Mocker. Ridicule *not* the test of truth. The glory of knowing and believing, all but a stranger to him; only with that of questioning and qualifying is he familiar. His tragicomical explosions, more like a bundle of rockets than a volcano. Character of the age into which he was cast. What is implied by a Lover of Wisdom. Voltaire loved Truth, but chiefly of the triumphant sort. His love of fame: 'Necessity' of lying: Can either fly or crawl, as the occasion demands. (133.)—His view of the world a cool, gently scornful, altogether prosaic one. His last ill-omened visit to Frederick the Great. His women, an embittered and embittering set of wantons from the earliest to the last: Widow Denis; the Marquise du Châtelet. The greatest of all *Persifleurs*. (145.)—His last and most striking appearance in society: The loudest and showiest homage ever paid to Literature. The last scene of all. (154.)—Intellectual gifts: His power of rapid, perspicuous Arrangement: His Wit, a mere logical pleasantry; scarcely a twinkling of Humour in the whole of his numberless sallies. Poetry of the toilette: Criticisms of Shakspeare,—Voltaire, and Frederick the Great: Let justice be shown even to French poetry. (161.)—Voltaire chiefly conspicuous as a vehement opponent of the Christian Faith: Shallowness of his deepest insight: The Worship of Sorrow, godlike Doctrine of Humility, all unknown to him. The Christian Religion itself can never die. Voltaire's whole character plain enough: A light, careless, courteous Man of the World: His chief merits belong to Nature and himself; his chief faults are of his time and country. The strange ungodly Age of Louis XV.: Honour; Enlightened Self-interest; Force of Public Opinion. Novalis, on the worthlessness and worth of French Philosophy. The death-stab to modern Superstition. The burning of a little straw may hide the Stars; but they are still there, and will again be seen. (171.)

NOVALIS.

No good Book, or good thing of any sort, shows its best face at first: Improvisators, and their literary soap-bubbles. Men of genius: The wise man's errors more instructive than the truisms of a fool. What is called 'reviewing;' showing how a small Reviewer may triumph over a great Author, and what his triumph is worth. The writings of Novalis of too much importance to be lightly passed by. (p. 183.)—Novalis's birth and parentage: Religious and secluded Childhood: Schooling. Applies himself honestly to business. Death of his first love: Communings with Eternity. Influence on his character of this wreck of his first passionate wish: Doctrine

of 'Renunciation.' Peace and cheerfulness of his life: Interest in the physical sciences. Acquaintance and literary coöperation with Schlegel and Tieck. Alarming illness: Hopeful literary projects: Gradual bodily decline, and peaceful death. Manners and personal aspect. (190.)—Wonderful depth and originality of his writings: His philosophic Mysticism. Idealism not confined to Germany. The Kantean view of the material Universe: Its intellectual and moral bearing on the practical interests of men. Influence on the deep, religious spirit of Novalis: Nature no longer dead hostile Matter; but the veil and mysterious Garment of the Unseen: The Beauty of Goodness, the only real, final possession. (200.)—Extracts from the *Lehrlinge zu Sais*, &c.; Manifold significance of all natural phenomena to the true observer; Beauty and omnipotence of childlike intuition; How the chastened understanding may be brought into harmony with the deepest intuitions and the most rigid facts: Nature, as viewed by the superstitious fanatic, the utilitarian inquirer, the sceptical idealist, and the regenerate Soul of man: The mechanics and dynamics of Thought; Eclectic Philosophers: Philosophic Fragments. (208.)—Novalis as a Poet: Extracts from *Hymns to the Night* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. His writings an unfathomed mine, where the keenest intellect may find occupation enough: His power of intense abstraction: His chief fault a certain undue passiveness. Likeness to Dante and Pascal. Intelligent, well-informed minds should endeavour to understand even Mysticism. Mechanical Superciliousness *versus* living Belief in God; the victory not doubtful. (219.)

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Our grand business, not to *see* what lies dimly in the distance; but to *do* what lies clearly at hand: Prophetic folly, and spiritual contagion. The Present always an important time. The Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense: Cases in point,—from hatching Chickens to developing the young Idea; from 'Interrogating Nature' up to delivering one's soul from Purgatory. (p. 230.)—No Philosophy of Mind to be found out of Germany. Mathematics all gone to mechanism. Locke's Essay, a singular emblem of the spirit of the times: Scotch and French mental-mechanism. The Machine of Society: Social mechanism more prized than individual worth. All wise inventions or discoveries, all great movements whatsoever spring inevitably from the individual souls of men. Mechanical and Dynamical provinces of human activity: Men have lost their belief in the Invisible; and believe, and hope, and work only in the Visible. Intellectual dapperlings, and their 'closet-logic' rushlights: *One* wise man stronger than *all* men foolish. (236.)—Religion no longer a thousand-voiced Psalm, from the heart of Man to his invisible Father; but a wise, prudential feeling, grounded on mere calculation. The working Church of England at this moment in the Editors of Newspapers. Even Poetry has no eye for the Invisible: Not a matin or vesper hymn to the Spirit of Beauty; but a fierce clashing of cymbals, as children pass through the fire to Moloch. Our 'superior morality' properly an 'inferior criminality:' Truth and Virtue no longer loved, as they ought and must be loved: Beyond money and money's worth, our only blessedness is Popularity. (247.)—Bright lights, as well as gloomy shadows. The wisdom and heroic worth of our forefathers we may yet recover. The darkest hour is nearest the dawn. (250.)

ON HISTORY.

History, man's earliest and simplest expression of Thought: As we *do* nothing but enact History, so likewise we *say* little but recite it. Ancient and modern historians. Vanity of all would-be 'Philosophies of History:' Before Philosophy can teach by Experience, Philosophy must first know how to do it; and above all, have the Experience intelligibly recorded. Infinite complexity of the simplest facts constituting the Experience of Life. The living, actual History of Humanity consists of far other and more fruitful activities than those recorded in history-books. (p. 253.)—Worth and worthlessness of historic testimonies; the Seer, and mere Onlookers. Inevitable discrepancy between a mere linear Narrative of 'successive events;' and the actual, infinitely-related Aggregate of Activities, the daily record of which could alone constitute a complete History. Better were it that mere earthly historians should lower their pretensions to Philosophy; and aim only at some faithful picture of the things acted. (256.)—The historical Artist and the historical Artisan. Growing feeling of the infinite nature of History. Division of labour: The Political and the Ecclesiastical historian: Church History, could it speak wisely, would have momentous secrets to teach. Histories of a less ambitious character. Old healthy identity of Priest and Philosopher. Historic Ideals: Necessity for honest insight. (259.)

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

RICHTER'S REVIEW OF MADAME DE STAEL'S 'ALLEMAGNE.'

To review a Revieweress of two literary Nations no easy task. Madame de Staël's peculiar advantages and fitness in everything but a comprehension of her subject: Her French intellect and German heart. Parisian refinement: Classical indifference to the 'household-stuff' of Religion, and to mere Work-people. How she bleaches and clear-starches the Rainbow; and even makes a polished gentleman of the German Hercules. German dingy impracticability, notwithstanding: Mere Nightingales, compared with Peacocks. Poor naked unfallen Eves and Graces; how shall they be presented at our Parisian Court! (p. 265.)—Value and deep human interest of national peculiarities. We cannot wholly see ourselves, except in the eye of a foreign seer. Use and abuse of the literary file. German political subserviency; and French Imperial sycophancy. German conversational maladroitness: Awkward tendency to try and say *something truly*; rather than, like the polished Frenchman, to say *nothing elegantly*. German wit, and French witticisms. Shallow estimate of Goethe: Better insight into Schiller: Jean Paul's literary delinquencies. Intellectual ladies, and their easy solution of metaphysical insolvabilities. Madame de Staël's high and earnest character: The language of her heart always a noble, pure and rich one. (275.)

No. 2.

SCHILLER, GOETHE AND MADAME DE STAEL.

Our Locomotive Age: The interest that once attached to mere travellers now gone. Madame de Staël's German Tour a notable exception. Spiritual adventures and feats of intellect. (p. 289.) -Her jarring interviews with Goethe and Schiller, described by themselves. Intellectual incompatibilities, and National dissonances: French glitter and glibness; German depth and taciturnity. Goethe's summary of the whole circumstances and significance of her uncongenial yet profitable visit. (291.)

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